



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

This thesis has been submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for a postgraduate degree (e.g. PhD, MPhil, DClinPsychol) at the University of Edinburgh. Please note the following terms and conditions of use:

- This work is protected by copyright and other intellectual property rights, which are retained by the thesis author, unless otherwise stated.
- A copy can be downloaded for personal non-commercial research or study, without prior permission or charge.
- This thesis cannot be reproduced or quoted extensively from without first obtaining permission in writing from the author.
- The content must not be changed in any way or sold commercially in any format or medium without the formal permission of the author.
- When referring to this work, full bibliographic details including the author, title, awarding institution and date of the thesis must be given.

The Creation, Organisation and Work of the Red Army's political
apparatus during the Civil War (1918-1920).

Steven John Main

Ph.D.
University of Edinburgh
1989



Contents:

Abstract.....	i
Abbreviations.....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iii-v
Introduction.....	vi-xiv
Chapter One: First steps towards the creation of a Red Army political apparatus (January-March 1918).....	pp.1-16
Notes.....	pp.17-18
Chapter Two (section one): The creation of the Bolsheviks' first centralised political organ for the Red Army: the formation and organisational structure of the All-Russian Bureau of Military Commissars (April 1918-April 1919).....	pp.19-35
Notes.....	pp.36-38
Chapter Two (section two): VBVK and the role of the military commissars in the Red Army (April 1918-April 1919)....	pp.39-101
sub-section (i): what was a military commissar?.....	pp.41-46
sub-section (ii): the initial experience of VBVK and the military commissars (April-May 1918).....	pp.46-47
sub-section (iii): VBVK and the work of the First All-Russian Congress of Military Commissars (June 1918).....	pp.48-69
sub-section (iv): the changing military situation and the role of the military commissars (June-September 1918).....	pp.69-80
sub-section (v): the response of the centre to the changing role of the military commissars (September-December 1918).....	pp.81-86
sub-section (vi): numbers.....	pp.86-87
sub-section (vii): courses.....	pp.88-94
sub-section (viii): daily activity of the military commissars (1918-1919).....	pp.94-101
Notes.....	pp.102-107
Chapter Two (section three): VBVK and the role of the Party cells in the Red Army (April 1918-April 1919).....	pp.108-145
Notes.....	pp.146-150
Chapter Two (section four): VBVK and the Red Army's political departments (June 1918-April 1919).....	pp.151-214
sub-section (i): the creation and growth of the network of political departments on the Eastern Front (June-December 1918).....	pp.153-181
sub-section (ii): the activity of the Red Army's political departments on the Southern Front (September-December 1918).....	pp.181-192
sub-section (iii): formal recogniton of the Party-political status of the political departments (December 1918).....	pp.193-197
sub-section (iv): political departmental activity elsewhere in the Red Army units (September 1918-February 1919)....	pp.197-203
sub-section (v): VBVK's attempt to establish direct contact with the front-line political departments (January 1919).....	pp.204-208

Contents (cont),

sub-section (vi): future conduct of political work in the Red Army and the Red Army's political departments (January-March 1919).....	pp.208-214
Notes.....	pp.215-221
Chapter Two (section five): VBVK and the 8th Party Congress-the final chapter in the activity of VBVK (March-April 1919).....	pp.222-240
Notes.....	pp.241-243
Chapter Three (section one): the creation and organisational structure of the Political Administration of the Revolutionary Military Soviet of the Republic (May 1919-November 1920).....	pp.244-272
Notes.....	pp.273-277
Chapter Three (section two): the leadership of the Political Administration of the Revolutionary Military Soviet of the Republic (PUR) during the Civil War (May 1919-January 1921).....	pp.278-291
Notes.....	pp.292-293
Chapter Three (section three): the Political Administration of the Revolutionary Military Soviet of the Republic and the Work of the Military Commissars (May 1919-December 1920).....	pp.294-314
sub-section (i): Smilga and Trotsky on the role of the military commissars (February 1919-March 1920).....	pp.297-309
sub-section (ii): practical reaction to the idea of abolishing the military commissars.....	pp.310-311
sub-section (iii): conclusions.....	pp.311-314
Notes.....	pp.315-316
Chapter Three (section four): the Political Administration of the Revolutionary Military Soviet of the Republic and the work of the First All-Russian Congress of Political Workers of the Red Army (December 1919).....	pp.317-362
sub-section (i): the number of commissars and Communists in the Red Army (1919).....	pp.323-328
sub-section (ii): PUR's 1919 budget.....	pp.329-330
sub-section (iii): PUR and the political workers sent to the front (1919).....	pp.330-332
sub-section (iv): PUR and the agitational literature sent to the front (1919).....	pp.332-334
sub-section (v): the work of PUR's cultural-educational department in 1919.....	pp.334-336
sub-section (vi): the work of PUR's literary-publications department in 1919.....	pp.336-337
sub-section (vii): PUR and the work of the local political apparatus at the front (1919).....	pp.338-342
sub-section (viii): Smilga's and Trotsky's speeches and the closing of the First All-Russian Congress of Political Workers (December 1919).....	pp.342-349

Contents (cont).

sub-section (ix): the resolutions of the First All-Russian Congress of Political Workers (December 1919).....	pp.349-360
sub-section (x): conclusions.....	pp.361-362
Notes.....	pp.363-367
Chapter Three (section five): PUR and political-educational work in the Red Army in 1919-1920.....	pp.368-417
sub-section (i): PUR and the mobilisation and distribution of CP members and political workers to the front Red Army units (October 1919-August 1920).....	pp.369-378
sub-section (ii): evaluating the military value of the CP members, political workers and workers to the Red Army (1919-1920).....	pp.378-385
sub-section (iii): PUR and the political and cultural-educational work in the Red Army (1920)-background....	pp.385-388
sub-section (iv): PUR and the achievements of the Red Army's political and cultural-educational apparatus (1920)...	pp.388-413
sub-section (iv): the restructuring of the Red Army's political and cultural-educational apparatus (September-November 1920).....	pp.414-417
Notes.....	pp.418-423
Chapter Four-Conclusion.....	pp.424-451
Appendix one: organisational structure of PUR in May 1919.....	pp.452-466
Appendix two: biographies of the leading figures of the Red Army's Civil War political apparatus.....	pp.467-484
Appendix three: various diagrams on Red Army's central political apparatus in 1918-1920.....	pp.485-489
Selected Bibliography.....	pp.489-503

The main aim of this dissertation has been to examine the creation, organisation and work of the Red Army's Civil War political apparatus and assess its overall contribution to the Bolshevik war effort. To this end, the dissertation itself consists of 4 main chapters and a number of appendices, detailing not only the work of the main political organs of the Red Army, but also the main personalities involved.

The first chapter is an introductory chapter, examining the organ, which many Soviet historians have for a long time considered to be the Bolsheviks' first attempt at the creation of a centralised political organ for the Red Army, namely the Organisation-agitation department of the All-Russian Collegiate for the Formation and Organisation of the Red Army.

The work carried out for the first chapter then leads to a discussion of the work of arguably the first real attempt by the Bolsheviks to create a properly functioning political organ specifically for the Red Army, namely the All-Russian Bureau of Military Commissars (VBVK). The chapter has been sub-divided into a number of sections, in order to allow a greater detailed examination of the work, personalities and difficulties that the central political apparatus faced in its attempts to exert some sort of control over the various constituent parts of the front political apparatus-the military commissars, the Party cells and the ever-increasing important political departments in the period 1918-1919.

That VBVK was not to be a crowning success is revealed by the necessity that the Bolsheviks felt towards the beginning of 1919 to abolish VBVK and create arguably the centralised political organ of the Red Army during the Civil War period-the Political Administration of the Revolutionary Military Soviet of the Republic (PUR). Created in May 1919, PUR was to face many of the same problems that had beset VBVK a year or so earlier but, on the whole, coped with them better and political and cultural-educational work in the Red Army proceeded apace.

The final, conclusive chapter brings all the threads together and assesses the claims made for the political work carried out in the front-line Red Army units during 1918-1920 and, whilst admitting that the Bolsheviks did spend much time on promoting the apparatus in a number of ways, the assertions made by generations of Soviet historians concerning the overall value of the political and cultural-educational work carried out in the Red Army are still too grandiose and that there is a lack of concrete evidence available, proving the worth of the political work carried out and its positive military consequences.

Abbreviations:-

CC RKP(B)-Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party
(Bolsheviks);

CEC-Central Executive Committee;

PUR-Politicheskoe upravleni Revvoensoveta Respubliki, trans.
the Political Administration of the Revolutionary Military
Soviet of the Republic;

RKKA-Raboche-Krestianskaya Krasnaya Armiya, trans. the
Worker's-Peasants' Red Army;

RMS-Revolutionary Military Soviet;

RVSR-Revoliutsionniy Voenniy Soviet Respubliki, trans. the
Revolutionary Military Soviet of the Republic;

VBVK-Vserossiiskoe buro voennykh komissarov, trans. the All-
Russian Bureau of Military Commissars;

VVS-Vyshshiy Voenniy Soviet, trans. the Higher Military Soviet.

Acknowledgements

The compilation of this dissertation has taken a number of years of research and the final product owes as much to the help and assistance of a number of individuals, as well as to my own persistence and determination. Without the help, a word used in the widest possible sense, of a lot of people, I am not all that confident that this dissertation would have saw the light of day.

First of all, I would like to take the opportunity to publicly acknowledge a huge debt of gratitude to my parents, Mr. and Mrs. William Main, whose unstinted support for my academic aspirations have kept me going through all these years. In this context, I should also like to say a big thank-you to my brother, Mr. David Main who, at a very crucial stage of the work for this dissertation, stepped in and, at no small sacrifice to himself, made it possible for me to continue my research. Similarly, how my wife, Mrs. Alla Main, has managed to put up with me and my dissertation for the past three years is anyone's guess, but she has and both for her love and support over that period, I will always be in her debt.

Outside of the immediate family, I would also like to express my deepest gratitude and respect for the man who, both in terms of time and intellectual energy, contributed hugely to

this work and played a key role in its eventual completion-my supervisor for many years, Mr. Ramsay McWhirter. How he managed to sustain both the drive and interest necessary to see this dissertation through all the years of financial uncertainty and, worse than that, reading the first drafts in my own handwriting is beyond me! Jokes aside, though, he played a very important role in helping me to sort out what I really wanted to say about the topic and the completion of this dissertation is thanks to no small effort on his part.

In expressing my thanks and appreciation of the help and assistance, both financial and intellectual, to the man who, in many ways, sparked off my initial interest in Soviet history, then a special place must be allocated to Mr. James Burton. In practical terms, he stepped in when it was needed most but, in a whole host of other ways, his support was always appreciated. To his wife, Mrs. Pat Burton, I would also like to say a sincere thank-you for everything that she has done for both my wife and myself in the past few years.

For stepping in at the eleventh hour, so to speak, I would also like to thank my present supervisors, Mr. John Gooding and Dr. David Guild. They have played their allotted roles and I would like to thank them for stepping in to see me through.

For their tremendous help in acquiring materials for me, I should also like to thank the staff at Inter-Library Loans, especially Margaret Dowling, Jill Evans and John Green. For postgraduate students, I.L.L. provides an exceptionally

important service and, without fear of contradiction, I would say that a lot of dissertations would go largely uncompleted if it were not for the great help and assistance that the staff at I.L.L. provide. They have been a tremendous help to me over the years, of that there can be no doubt.

I would also like to say thank you to the offices of the British Council, who granted me a year's scholarship to the USSR in 1985-1986. It was that year that effectively made this dissertation, thanks to the access to materials I was able to get at the Lenin and INION Libraries in Moscow. In this context, I would also like to publicly thank the authorities of Moscow State University, who provided me with virtually everything I needed for a successful study trip to the USSR.

I would also like to express my appreciation for the financial assistance rendered to me over a period of years by the Carnegie Trust for the Universities of Scotland-again, their assistance was most timely. In this context, I would also like to thank Mr.and Mrs.David Bessant for their financial help at an important stage of completing this work.

In their own different ways and in various degrees, the following list of individuals have also played their own unique roles in helping me complete this work- Mr.Edmund Bradley, Mr. Jim Cosgrove, Mr. Eric McCallum, Mr. John McKenzie, Mr. Robert Parker, Miss Willa Stewart and, last but by no means least, Prof.D.Ward.

INTRODUCTION

The theme for this dissertation topic arose out of an earlier MA dissertation, which I wrote in 1983, on analysing the relationship between the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the organisation of the Red Army in the Civil War, 1918-1920. Although the latter was a relatively small work, in terms of the number of words, it nonetheless forced me to begin to wonder about the exact nature of the links between the Communist Party and the Red Army's political apparatus during the Civil War period. Due to restrictions of length, I was not in a position to say much about the exact nature of the links between the two, nor was I in a position to write too much about the actual creation of the Red Army's political apparatus, its structure, the main personalities involved, etc.

However, on completion of the dissertation, I was concerned that I had uncovered a lot of questions which I was then not in a position to answer fully and which seemed to me to be worthy of more serious and detailed examination—for instance, questions about how the Red Army's political apparatus came into being or examining the nature of the relationship between the central political apparatus and the Red Army's political

apparatus, serving the needs of the Red Army soldiers at the front. Try as hard as I could, I simply could not find the answers I sought in the relevant Western literature on the Civil War. Although the Soviet literature on the topic is not inconsiderable, for reasons of politics, I found that Soviet historians tended to make too many uncritical claims about the importance and role of the Red Army's political apparatus during the Civil War. These statements compelled me to seriously think about whether or not there was, in actual fact, any truth in the assertions made about the role of the Red Army's political apparatus during 1918-1920 and I therefore decided that it was an area worthy of further research, for which material did exist, but which, for a variety of reasons, Western historians had paid little attention to in the past. There was also the added interest that a number of the prominent personalities involved in the running of the main political organs created specifically to serve the Red Army were later to be found in the political opposition movement in the 1920s and later purged by Stalin in the 1930s-people like I.T.Smilga, Ch.G.Rakovsky, A.G.Beloborodov, V.D.Kasparova, etc., about whom relatively little was known- and it was also true that very, very few people who had been in charge of a Army or Front political department outlived the General Secretary. This implied that amongst those who actually

served in the Red Army's political apparatus during 1918-1920 were life-long Bolshevik Party members, some of whom would later be included in the group of Party veterans which became known as the "Old Bolsheviks", selfless men and women who had served the Party's interests long before the 1917 October Revolution itself and had played a significant role in the 1917 October Revolution. I thought that this, in itself, was a strong indication, from the outset, that the Bolshevik Party did attach great importance to the organisation and workings of the Red Army's Civil War political apparatus.

Thus, the more I looked into the whole question of the creation, organisation and work of the Red Army's political apparatus during the Civil War, the more I became convinced that the whole issue had been too long neglected and that the time was ripe for a proper analysis to be undertaken. Thus, this dissertation will have very little to say about the military history of the Red Army-it has not been my intention to examine the battle history of the various units that went to make up the Red Army during 1918-1920-nor has it been my intention to write a purely political history of the Red Army at this time either. The main object of this dissertation has been to detail the history and workings of the Red Army's political apparatus and examine its contribution to the overall war effort of the Bolsheviks at this time.

Certainly, if one examines Soviet sources on this particular topic, then the Western historian would be in little doubt that the Red Army's political apparatus did play a significant role in the achievement of Bolshevik victory in the Civil War. However, given the political nature of the regime and, until very recently, the dutifully acknowledged commanding role of the CP in Soviet society, one has to treat such a view with a great deal of respect, if not salt! After all, one would expect Soviet historians to heap praise on the role of the CP during a prolonged period of crisis like the Civil War, especially as it occurred not long after the heroic days of the 1917 October Revolution. It is also the case that, as has happened countless times in historical writing before, the Civil War history of both the Communist Party and the Red Army has been written from the point of view of the victors and that, certainly again until fairly recently, it has been incumbent on Soviet historians to be fulsome in their praise for the CP's political apparatus in the Red Army at this time.

However, the work undertaken for this dissertation, would appear to show that Soviet historians have been very careful in their selection of the available evidence and presentation of the "facts", as they have detailed them. Whilst it is true, for instance, that between 1918-1920, the CC passed 40 special resolutions on political work in

the Red Army units; that every single Party Congress and Party conference, held during 1918-1920, did debate political work in the Red Army or, at least, the work of those parts of the apparatus actually carrying out political work in the Red Army, it is also true to say that, by the end of 1920, the Red Army's political apparatus had become, in its own way, a fairly large bureaucratic machine, which could supply exact figures on the amount of newspapers sent to each of the individual fronts, but still ran into significant problems in dealing with the local political apparatus, serving the needs of the men at the front. Thus, as has happened countless times in the past, historical truth would appear to have been the victim of political necessity and, in general, I thought that it was about time that the claims and assertions made by Soviet historians in this whole area be subjected to as thorough analysis as the source materials would allow.

To a certain extent, what has happened in the USSR, as regards the whole question of analysing the role of the Red Army's political apparatus during the Civil War, is that Soviet historians have been faced with a bit of a quandary in their attempts to examine the issues connected with the creation, organisation and work of the political apparatus. Since the Red Army's political apparatus was a creation of the Party and all institutions created by the

Party have, for a long time now, been beyond reproach, Soviet historians have had to adopt a fairly uncritical approach to the work and achievements of the Red Army's political apparatus during the Civil War. However, it has also been the case that, for a long time, the actual leaders of the Red Army's political apparatus, as stated before, became "non-people" and even after Khrushchev's "Secret Speech", Soviet historians, whilst still having to praise the role and achievements of the Red Army's Civil War political apparatus, still found it largely uncomfortable to talk about the real issues involved in the creation of the Red Army's political apparatus or discuss the importance of the people directly involved in the creation and organisation of the Red Army's political apparatus. As a result, they have tended to gloss over a lot of the more unpalatable features of the development of the Red Army's political apparatus during this period, as well as the role of each of the individual Bolshevik Party members who played a not inconsiderable part in the organisation and work of the Red Army's political apparatus in 1918-1920.

For too long now, Soviet historians have tended not to discuss such important issues as the lack of centralised coordination between the central political apparatus and the political apparatus at the front; the very serious debates that went on in the Red Army and the CP itself

about the future utility, for instance, of that previous bastion of the Red Army's political apparatus, the military commissars; ignore discussing the importance of the top people involved in the control of the Red Army's centralised political organs, namely the All-Russian Bureau of Military Commissars and the Political Department of the Revolutionary Military Soviet of the Republic; not discuss the failings of the Red Army's top political organs in not being able to establish the necessary coordination of work, so desired by the central political authorities; ignore the see-saw that took place, in terms of personnel, in the running of the Party's most important Civil War political organ for the Red Army-the Political Administration of the Revolutionary Military Soviet of the Republic, etc., etc. These and other issues have never been fully addressed by Soviet historians in the past and, on the basis of a lot of previously unused primary source materials, including a number of very rare newspapers and journals actually published by the various Army and Front political departments themselves, this dissertation will address all these previously taboo areas and judge whether, or not, the Red Army's political apparatus did play the role allotted to it by generations of Soviet historians.

In general, it should be noted here that the term, "political apparatus", is used throughout this

dissertation to denote those organs, or personnel, either working directly in the political structure of the field Red Army units on the front, e.g. the Party cells, the military commissars, the political departments, etc., as well as the centralised political organs, specifically created to take charge of political work in the Red Army.

As regards the chronology of the dissertation, it begins with an examination of what a number of historians have considered as the Red Army's first centralised political organ-the Organisation-agitation department of the All-Russian Collegiate for the Organisation and Administration of the Red Army-and ends in November 1920, when the then main political organ for the Red Army, the Political Department of the Revolutionary Military Soviet of the Republic, was partially absorbed by the newly-created Main Political-Educational Committee for Political Education. Thus, this dissertation will consist of four main chapters-split up further into a number of sub-sections and sub-divisions, in order to allow the better use of the materials presented-and a number of appendices, detailing the structure of the Red Army's political apparatus at various times throughout 1918-1920, as well as the structure of the Political Department of the Revolutionary Military Soviet of the Republic in May 1919 and a biographical appendix, containing the biographies of those most important personalities involved in the

organisation and work of the Red Army's Civil War
political apparatus.

CHAPTER ONE:-

FIRST STEPS TOWARDS THE CREATION OF A RED ARMY POLITICAL APPARATUS (JANUARY-MARCH 1918).

In general, it has to be said that prior to the creation of the Red Army in January 1918, very little attention had been paid by the Bolsheviks to the possibility of creating a political apparatus, indeed, as Professor J.Erickson has shown, even the idea of a standing army itself was treated with a great degree of initial distrust and caution.¹ Prior to the creation of the Red Army itself, there was no one single, centralised organ which could even claim to be the forerunner of the main Red Army political organs that were to eventually develop-neither the Petrograd Military Revolutionary Committee's Bureau of Military Commissars nor the Central Executive Committee's Military department can be considered as early attempts by the Bolsheviks to begin creating the necessary political apparatus for the Red Army, as both organs were concerned with a wide variety of other tasks other than either purely military or political.² Not too surprisingly, given the military urgency of the situation, the Bolsheviks were more concerned with building up the necessary agitational apparatus for the Red Army, thereby ensuring that a

sufficient number of recruits were passing into the ranks of the Red Army, than overtly worrying about what happened to them once they got there. However, even though a definite political apparatus for the Red Army did not take shape right away, certainly in this period, there were signs that some of the agitational activity was giving rise to the need for a properly functioning political organ for the Red Army to be created.

The first real political organ for the Red Army-the All-Russian Bureau of Military Commissars, hereinafter referred to simply by the English transliteration of its Russian abbreviation, i.e. VBVK-was created just outwith the period of this particular chapter (in April 1918, in actual fact), and did have a predecessor, of sorts, in the activity and functions of one organ actually operating during this early period, namely the Organisation-agitation department of the All-Russian Collegiate for the Organisation and Administration of the Red Army.³ Before going on to discuss the work of this organ in detail, as well as the work of the other future important parts of the Red Army's political apparatus, it should be noted that, as will be shown in the chapters ahead, the Red Army's political apparatus gradually developed throughout 1918-1919 due to a mixture of centralised dictate and experience born on the front itself. This was evident even in the early organisation of the Soviet armed forces-

both Party cells and the commissars were operating in Red Army units long before either the CC or the relevant military authorities did anything about defining their functions. Thus, despite the lack of apparent activity at the centre, it could well have been the case that some very rudimentary campaigns of political work were being carried out either by the Party cells, left over after the 1917 October Revolution, or by individual military commissars, appointed to the military units. It is, however, impossible to speculate further, as the lack of archival material on this particular question prevents us from examining this matter in any detail. Thus, all that this chapter will do is detail the work of the organs and bodies, relevant to the future development of the Red Army's political apparatus, even if the work that they initially carried out may seem trivial, in comparison with the work of the future political organs of the Red Army. Bearing the latter in mind, it is now possible to begin this work by examining the aforementioned organ-namely, the Organisation-agitation department of the All-Russian Collegiate.

The Organisation-agitation department of the All-Russian Collegiate was created on 7th February 1918 and, according to one source, its chief was L.M.Kaganovich.⁴ Although it has not been possible to trace the exact date of his appointment, it is known that on the 12th February,

he did address a special meeting of the Organisation-agitation department of the All-Russian Collegiate as its chief. Unfortunately, Klyatskin's account of the meeting does not go into any great detail about what Kaganovich is supposed to have said at the meeting, but Kaganovich apparently developed a series of points about the general tasks of the Organisation-agitation department of the All-Russian Collegiate. All that Klyatskin did note was the following two points, namely that in Kaganovich's address, the tasks of the department were:

the extension of a broad campaign of agitation on the question of organising the Red Army and satisfying the cultural-educational demands of the Red Army units.⁵

Unfortunately, there is no further detail provided on how these tasks were supposed to be carried out. However, in a report prepared by the Organisation-agitation department of the All-Russian Collegiate and sent to the Supreme Military Soviet in May 1918, the department did detail the activity of its two main sub-departments for the period, January-April 1918, thus providing us with some idea of what the department actually did during this important, formative period in the history of the Red Army.⁶

The two main sub-departments of the Organisation-agitation department of the All-Russian Collegiate were the organisation and agitation-education sub-departments. As stated earlier, the initial emphasis in the creation

and organisation of the Red Army was simply getting enough men into uniform and quickly dispatch them to the front to do the fighting. As is shown by the reports of these two sub-departments, there was no complex, sophisticated programme of cultural-educational work being carried out; after all, even by May 1918, the Red Army was still a very small organisation, numbering some 196,000 men.⁷ The priority for the Bolsheviks was building a army large enough to withstand the military onslaught of the enemies of the new regime. Thus, the work of these two sub-departments consisted largely in agitating for recruitment into the Red Army: between February-April 1918, the sub-departments trained and sent out a grand total of 393 "organisers-agitators" to aid recruitment in the towns and localities, 386 of whom were Bolshevik Party members.⁸ However, compared to the courses that were later to be developed for and in the Red Army itself, these courses were purely for agitational and recruitment purposes only and bore very little resemblance to the future cultural-educational and political courses.

In its cultural-educational activity, the agitation-education sub-department was also equally modest in the work that it carried out. Whilst it is true to say that it did open the first Red Army club in Petrograd, it is impossible to say just how important this club was to the future development of the club network in the Red Army.

Its achievements were, to say the least, very modest-a library, facilities for the men to play dominoes and the likes, instead of cards, a membership that ran into hundreds, not thousands, etc. It is also true to say that this sub-department had published 15 different pamphlets and brochures on various subjects and distributed them to the localities, in a total volume of circulation of 2,406,000 copies. It would appear, however, that they were purely of an agitational nature than anything else.⁹

Thus, on the face of things, there would appear to be very little evidence for including such an organ, i.e. the Organisation-agitation department of the All-Russian Collegiate for the Organisation and Administration of the Red Army, in a history of the Red Army's Civil War political apparatus and yet, for more than eight decades, a number of Soviet historians, despite the very meagre evidence presently available, insist on doing just that. As early as 1922, the historical line, so to speak, was laid about the Organisation-agitation department of the All-Russian Collegiate:

the Organisation-agitation department of the All-Russian Collegiate was the first centralised political apparatus of the Red Army.¹⁰

A couple of years after the latter remark, this statement was further expanded upon by another article which appeared in "Politrabotnik", written by a former

political worker in the Red Army during the Civil War,
Vladimir Faydysh:

it is possible to consider the Organisation-agitation department of the All-Russian Collegiate as the first centralised military-political organ.¹¹

Unfortunately, neither of the two articles produced any evidence to support their views-why should the Organisation-agitation department of the All-Russian Collegiate be considered as the Red Army's first political organ? Certainly, in 1930, a group of prominent Soviet military historians published a work in which they stated that the Organisation-agitation department of the All-Russian Collegiate could not be considered as the Red Army's first political organ, as they latter was not able to encompass("okhvatyvat")the political leadership of the Red Army.¹² They further went on to argue that the political leadership of the army was split and decentralised and concentrated, mainly, "in the hands of the local Party organs."¹³

However, regardless of the accuracy of the above view, the older view still continued to hold sway. For instance in 1939, an article was published in the USSR's main military-historical organ, "Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal", stating that:

the Organisation-agitation department was effectively the first political organ of the Red Army.¹⁴

This view has continued to dominate in more recent historical writing: in 1984, two Soviet historians, V.Portnov and M.Slavin, wrote in their history of the development of the Soviet armed forces that:

the first specialised political organ for the Red Army, operating in the centre, was created on 7th February 1918 and was the Organisation-agitation department of the All-Russian Collegiate for the Organisation of the Red Army. 14A.

Again, though, no real evidence is produced to support this view. On the strength of the available material, it would be pushing historical facts to the limit to say that the Organisation-agitation department of the All-Russian Collegiate for the Organisation of the Red Army was the direct forerunner to the Red Army's two main Civil War political organs, namely, the All-Russian Bureau for Military Commissars and its replacement, the Political Administration of the Revolutionary Military Soviet of the Republic, analysed and detailed in the chapters ahead. There is no available evidence showing that the organ carried out nothing but purely agitational or recruitment type functions. There is no proof that the organ was in charge of, or exercised control over, the military commissars or the Party cells, such as they existed. In fact, there is no evidence showing that the organ was involved in any way with the work of the military commissars or the Party cells during its brief existence. However, it could be the case that a new wave of research

into the origins of the Red Army and its political apparatus will support the contention of yet another group of distinguished Soviet military historians who, in 1984, published a historical analysis of the Soviet Army's political apparatus, in which they had the following interesting comments to make on Organisation-agitation department of the All-Russian Collegiate for the Organisation of the Red Army:

it is not possible to agree with a number of authors...who have considered the Organisation-agitation department to have been the first centralised political organ of the Red Army. It would be more accurate to consider it to have been a prototype for the central political organs. In the first place, the organ was not the sole central organ. Along with it carrying out work were the CC's All-Russian Bureau of Military Organisations, which did a lot of work in creating the Red Army, also the CEC's Agitational collegiate, which conducted agitational work for recruitment into the Red Army. Secondly, the Organisation-agitation department carried out work not so much amongst the troops, as amongst the workers and the poorer peasantry, agitating and enlisting volunteers for recruitment into the ranks of the Red Army.¹⁵

Why it should have been the case that for so long the view has been held that the organisation-agitation department was the Red Army's first political organ is almost impossible to explain, other than, perhaps, it was/is a case of historical neatness, i.e. Soviet historians looking for the beginning of the Red Army's political apparatus and picking on this organ, as it came into being virtually at the same time as the creation of the Red Army itself. Regardless of the motives, however,

it cannot be said that the Organisation-agitation department was the Red Army's first political organ: as stated in 1930 and again in 1984, the organ was not really concerned with either working amongst the troops or carrying out any form of political-agitational work amongst the men themselves. It was the creation of the All-Russian Bureau for Military Commissars in April 1918 that was to represent the first real attempt by the Bolsheviks to create a single, centralised political organ for the Red Army. The Organisation-agitation department of the All-Russian Collegiate for the Organisation of the Red Army can, at best, be only viewed as a prototype for what was to follow, not as a fully-fledged political organ in its own right.

As stated earlier, despite the existence of the Petrograd Military Revolutionary Committee's Bureau of Military Commissars, the latter cannot be regarded as the embryo of a future political organ for the Red Army. Just after the revolution had begun in Petrograd, commissars were appointed by the Petrograd Soviet's Military Revolutionary Committee, "in the interests of the defence of the revolution and its gains from attempts on the part of counter-revolutionary forces."¹⁶ Thus, commissars were appointed not only to ensure the loyalty of military units in Petrograd and its immediate environs, but also to ensure that the Bolsheviks held control of the key

civilian institutions in the city. In other words, in the immediate aftermath of the revolution, commissars were appointed to ensure that the revolution was defended against attempts by counter-revolutionary forces to throw the revolution back on its heels. In the military units in which they served, carrying on from the previous policy of the Provisional Government, the military commissars were viewed as political representatives of the government/Party in power.¹⁷ However, as yet, they were not necessarily viewed as all being Party-political representatives of the regime-as will be discussed later, a significant number of military commissars, who served in the ranks of the Red Army in 1918, were not members of the Bolshevik Party-and it is also true that it would appear that they did not carry out any form of cultural-educational work amongst the troops, but at least, the commissars in 1917 did bear some resemblance to what they were to become in the months ahead. In general, the initial role of the military commissar in the army was to induce some confidence in the work of the command staff; as one Soviet historian pointed out, (himself a former commissar in the army during this period):

as between the commander (who only a few days before had been in 'faith and truth' serving the Tsar) and the Red soldiers, their hung a 'precipice', the role of the commissar, as the political organ of the Soviet government in the army, had to be reduced to the establishment of the necessary bond of confidence between them.¹⁸

Thus, despite the elimination of the Petrograd Military Revolutionary Committee in December 1917, the commissars were retained and the special Bureau of Military Commissars enhanced.¹⁹ All military commissars who had previously served under the control of the Petrograd Military Revolutionary Committee were now transferred to the control of the CEC's Military department; they were also requested to send in details of their work to the latter organ by the end of December 1917.²⁰ However, it is not yet known how the Bureau actually discharged its functions vis a vis the military commissars, how it was expected to control them and ensure that they worked in the best interests of the regime. Whilst the Bureau would appear to have had no specific political role to perform in the Red Army, nevertheless it would be interesting to find out a little bit more of what it actually did during this period. All that is known, other than what has already been described, is that its activity was confined to a specific geographical area, i.e. that of Petrograd and its immediate environs, it was not required to work further afield. This would have reduced its impact to a fairly "localised" character, in effect. In concluding an article on the origins of the military commissars, one authoritative Soviet source stated the following:

the commissars of the Petrograd Military Revolutionary Committee, including those in the units of the old army,

and the military commissars of the Red Army were two entirely different institutions and it is incorrect to mix the two...only by order of 8th April[a reference to the creation of the All-Russian Bureau of Military Commissars, VBVK-SM]was created the central organ for the unification and leadership of their[the military commissars-SM]activity.²¹

The actual role of the military commissar, however, was being gradually developed and modified. Given the need that the Bolsheviks felt for a properly organised military force to defend the interests of the new regime and the distinct lack of trust towards the former Tsarist officer corps, the eventual role of the military commissar evolved from ensuring the best interests of the Soviet state to cooperating with the former command staff to ensure that proper military order was maintained and that the soldiers re-learnt to trust the command staff. Years of military failure, incompetence, agitation and revolution had all successfully combined to reduce the eventual resistance to the Bolsheviks when they seized power in October 1917, now, however, they had to use an institution of the former Provisional Government to begin re-creating the new military might of the regime. The military commissars, as will be shown below, were to play an important role in all of this.

In January 1918, N.V.Krylenko, (then Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Red Army), issued a special set of instructions, stating that:

in each army a responsible commissar is to be appointed

who, jointly with the command personnel and the army committees, will decide all questions connected with the formation of the army.²²

This would seem to be a clear indication of the cooperative nature of the relationship that was to exist between the command personnel and the commissar-both men were to be made equally responsible for the military efficacy of their unit. Later on, however, the commissar was to assume the extra mantle of responsibility of having to watch and control the activities of the command personnel in a wide range of activities. In itself, though, Krylenko's order was not enough and, not long after the appointment of Trotsky to the post of Commissar for War, the People's Commissariat of Military Affairs published a new statute entitled, "political control", ("politicheskii kontrol"), on 21st March 1918, in which the basic functions and role of the military commissars were outlined:

political control over the whole organisation and life of the army is entrusted to the military commissar. The post of military commissar is one of the most responsible and honoured in the Soviet Republic. The commissar maintains the closest possible internal link between the army and the Soviet regime. The commissar personifies the embodiment of revolutionary duty and unbreakable discipline. The commissar countersigns all important orders. With all the strength of his authority and power, the commissar will ensure the swift and unquestioning fulfilment of the operational and military orders of the military leaders.²³

In a article written by Trotsky at round about this

time, Trotsky stated that:

the military specialists will direct the technical end of the work, purely military matters, operation work and combat activities. The political side of the organisation, training and education, should be entirely subordinated to the representatives of the Soviet regime in the person of its commissar.²⁴

Thus, within the space of less than two months, the Bolsheviks had fully come round to both realising and publicly stating the importance of the military commissars in the construction of the Red Army and, more importantly for this particular work, also stating that political organisational activity was to be left in the hands of the military commissars. Certainly, both the order just quoted and the extract from Trotsky's article would appear to show that, as far as the Bolsheviks were concerned, political control over the whole life and activity of the army was to be left in the hands of the military commissars and not entrusted to someone else, eg, the soldiers' committees, the Party cells, local soviets, etc. However, even before the month was to be done, the role of the military commissars was to be further analysed, this time, however, not by another governmental body or even by Trotsky himself, but by the Party's CC.

A plenum of the Party's CC was held on 31st March 1918 to discuss, "the role of the commissars in the Army and the Fleet."²⁵ The outcome of this particular plenum of the Party's highest and most authoritative body was to be

made obvious a week after the actual plenum itself. In accordance with a decision of the plenum, on 6th April 1918, both the People's Commissariat of Military Affairs and the Supreme Military Soviet published a joint order, entitled "on the Military Commissars and the Members of the Military Soviets", in which, as will be detailed in the next chapter, the rights and duties of the military commissars were further expanded upon. Overall, though, the new order increased the responsibilities of the commissars still more.²⁶

Even if the regulations were still a bit vague on the exact nature of the duties of the military commissars in the political sphere, still there was little doubt that, gradually throughout January-March 1918, the Party picked the commissars to be at the centre of the political life of the Red Army units, in preference to the other organs still operating in the Red Army. This part of the early history of the Red Army's political apparatus, in many respects, came to an end and a new beginning just two days after the new order had been issued-on 8th April 1918, the All-Russian Bureau of Military Commissars was created and, although not perfect, the real process of building the Red Army's political apparatus had begun.

NOTES(1):-

1. J.Erickson, "The Origins of the Red Army", (R.Pipes, "Revolutionary Russia", Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1968, pp.224-258).
 2. The work of the Bureau is further examined in this chapter; for a detailed examination of the work of the CEC's Military department, see the relevant encyclopaedic entry in "Velikaya Oktyabrskaya Sotsialisticheskaya Revoliutsiya. Entsiklopediya." M.1987, p.91.
 3. "Partiino-politicheskaya rabota v Krasnoi Armii(aprel 1918-fevral 1919). Dokumenty." Vol.1, M.1961, p.4.
 4. S.Klyatskin, "Rozhdenie Raboche-Krestyanskoi Krasnoi armii (vosprosy stroitelstva RKKA v pervoi polovine 1918 g.)" 'Istoricheskii zhurnal', M.1941, No.7-8, p.18.
 - 5.Klyatskin, ibid., 1941, p.18.
 6. "Iz istorii grazhdanskoi voiny v SSSR. Sbornik dokumentov i materialov." Vol.1, M.1961, pp.105-107.
 7. Yu.I.Korablev, "V.I.Lenin i zashchita zavoevaniy Velikogo Oktiabrya." M.1979, p.267.
 8. "Iz istorii...", vol.1, p.106.
 9. "Rabochaya i Krestyanskaya Krasnaya Armiya i Flot." (Central government newspaper of the period). 15.2.1918.
 10. "Politrabotnik", No.10-11, M.1922, p.36.
 11. "Ibid.", No.4-5, M.1924, p.25.
 12. A.Geronimus, V.Krasilnikov, B.Petrov and S.Sterlin, "Osnovnye printsipy partiino-politicheskoi raboty v RKKA v voennoye i mirnoye vremya." Leningrad, 1930, p.26.
 13. Geronimus, Krasilnikov, Petrov and Sterlin, ibid., p.26.
 14. V.Andreyev, "Stalinskiye komissary." ('Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal', No.5, 1939, p.71).
 15. "Politorgany Sovetskikh Vooruzhennykh Sil. Istoriko-teoreticheskii ocherk." M.1984, p.30.
- 14A. V.M. Potanov, M.M. Naikin : "Pravoye osnovy ~~stroitelstva~~ Krasnoi Armii. 1918-1920 g." M.1985, p.48.

NOTES(2):-

16. P.A.Golub, "Kogda zhe byl uchrezden institut voennykh komissarov Krasnoi Armii?" ('Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal', No.4, M.1962, p.156).
17. F.White, "The growth of the Red Army", Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1944, p.74.
18. I.Petukhov, "Partiinaya organizsatsiya i partiinaya rabota v RKKA." M.-L. 1928, p.29.
19. "Petrogradskii Voenno-Revoliutsionnoi Komitet. Dokumenty i materialy." Vol.3, M.1967, p.570.
20. Ibid.
21. Golub, ibid., 1962, p.156.
22. V.Lunin, "Kogda zhe byl uchrezden institut voennykh komissarov?" ('Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal', No.9, M.1961, p.124).
23. P.Nikonov, "Glavneyshie momenty v organizatsii Krasnoi Armii", ('Grazhdanskaya voina, 1918-1921.' Vol.2, M.1928, p.124).
24. L.D.Trotsky, "Kak vooruzhalas revoliutsiya." Vol.1, M.1923, p.28.
25. "Velikaya Oktyabrskaya...", p.92.
26. Trotsky, "Kak vooruzhalas...", M.1923, vol.1, pp.406-7.

CHAPTER TWO (SECTION ONE):-

THE CREATION OF THE BOLSHEVIKS' FIRST CENTRALISED POLITICAL ORGAN FOR THE RED ARMY: THE FORMATION AND ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE ALL-RUSSIAN BUREAU OF MILITARY COMMISSARS (APRIL 1918-MARCH 1919).

The creation of the All-Russian Bureau of Military Commissars (hereinafter referred to by the English transliteration of the Russian abbreviation, VBVK) in April 1918 has to be viewed against the background of a relatively newly-formed socialist government, trying to find the correct organisational apparatus for controlling a newly-created military force. After all, it should not be forgotten that, at the end of 1917-beginning of 1918, the Bolsheviks had carried out a policy of demobilising the old army, in order to create the necessary basis for the creation of a new, more able, fighting force, more able in the sense that the new army would be more keen to serve the new political power in the land.

Throughout March 1918, demobilisation gathered apace- both on 2nd and 30th March, the People's Commissariat of Military Affairs issued further orders on the continuing demobilisation of the old army, a process that was due to be completed by 12th April 1918.¹ Another important factor in understanding the background to the creation of VBVK was the decision, by the Party's Central Committee

(CC) to abolish the Party's military organisations which had previously operated in the old army units.² This decree was put into effect as of 15th March and further heightened the need for a reappraisal of the role of the military commissars in the new army.

As the continued reorganisation of the military apparatus gathered force, the role of the military commissars began to assume an ever greater importance, especially as the regime decided to establish a network of local military commissariats all over the Republic, with the passing of the relevant decree on 8th April 1918.³ On the exact same date as the local commissariats came into being, the People's Commissariat of Military Affairs also issued the order which created VBVK. The original decree is reproduced below in full:

No.270 c.Moscow

8th April 1918

In the interests of coordinating and unifying the work of the military commissars and establishing control over them on a nationwide scale, the People's Commissariat of Military Affairs has decided to create, under its control, the All-Russian Bureau of Military Commissars. The organisation and leadership of the Bureau is entrusted to the member of the Military Commissariat-comrade I.Yurenev.⁴

The "I.Yurenev" in the order was the Party pseudonym for K.K.Krotovsky, a former journalist who had wide experience of propaganda-agitational work amongst soldiers during the First World War. At the beginning of 1918, Yurenev was appointed to both the All-Russian Collegiate

for the Organisation and Formation of the Red Army and the People's Commissariat of Military Affairs, therefore in its Chairman, VBVK would appear to have had a trusted and tried member of the Party, with plenty of agitational and growing military experience.⁵

Although VBVK had been created in April 1918 and its Chairman appointed, the first published statement on the actual staff of VBVK did not appear until 10th May 1918:

<u>Post</u>	<u>No. of Personnel</u>	<u>Monthly pay</u>
1. SECRETARIAT		
Secretary	1	700
Typist	1	450
2. GENERAL CLERICAL DEPARTMENT		
Head of Department	1	700
Journalist	2	500
Filing clerk	1	300
Typist	1	450
Messenger boy	1	300
3. ADMINISTRATIVE DEPT.		
Head of Department	1	700
Journalist	1	500
Typist	1	450
4. INSPECTOR-INSTRUCTOR DEPARTMENT		
Head of Department	1	700
Clerk	1	600
Adviser	1	450
Typist	1	450
Inspector	6	700
Messenger boy	1	300

6

According to the above, VBVK, by early May 1918, only had a total staff of 22 people, split between the 4 departments. Given this size, it would appear that VBVK was initially no more than a skeleton organisation, performing a not particularly wide range of functions. It is very difficult to believe that, despite the words of the original order of 8th April 1918 which created VBVK, that with only a staff of 22, it could possibly unify the activities of all the commissars serving in all the regions of the Republic.

In his speech to the First All-Russian Congress of Military Commissars in June 1918, Yurenev briefly touched upon the functions both of VBVK, in a general sense and of a few of the departments previously listed:

the Bureau has the task of unifying the volost, uezd, guberniya and okrug military commissars, scattered all over the provinces into one harmonious whole for the joint leadership of the Red Army. The Bureau is composed of the following departments: administrative-for supervising personnel; instructor-for directing and instructing the activity of the military commissars on all matters and the inspectorate-for checking on results achieved and their correct implementation in the provinces.⁷

Although it is not listed in the May 1918 statement on the staff of VBVK nor in Yurenev's June 1918 statement, according to another order of the People's Commissariat of Military Affairs, dated 23rd April 1918, VBVK was supposed to have one other department in its organisational structure, namely an agitational-educational department.⁸

However, there would appear to be a significant body of evidence, most of it culled from primary source materials of the time, which would seem to show that the order of 23rd April remained, in effect, on paper, rather than one which was put into practise right away. One of the strongest pieces of evidence in favour of a later date for the creation of VBVK's agitation-education department comes from a report on the activity of VBVK and its agitation-education department, first published in 1918.⁹ In this report can be found the following extract:

after the disbandment of the All-Russian Collegiate for the Organisation of the Red Army [a process which began in April 1918 and was not completed until May 1918-SM], it was proposed that the organisation-agitation department reorganise to become the All-Russian Agitational Bureau of the Red Army under the control of the Central Executive Committee. On the 27th April, a organisational meeting of the bureau took place at which it was properly constructed... Having lasted about a month, by order of the People's Commissariat of Military Affairs the bureau was renamed the agitation-education department of the All-Russian Bureau of Military Commissars.¹⁰

Given the latter statement plus the fact that the department was not mentioned in the May 1918 staff statement nor in Yurenev's speech to the First All-Russian Congress of Military Commissars in June 1918, there certainly would appear to be very strong grounds for believing that the original order of the People's Commissariat of Military Affairs was left lying on the shelf, so to speak. This begs the question of whether or

not this was a common practice at the time?

The Soviet military press of the period did, however, note the existence of yet another two departments of VBVK in this period-on 17th May 1918, the People's Commissariat of Military Affairs issued an order creating a "communications' services" department, attached to VBVK (total staff number of 48)¹¹ and, a week later, on 24th May 1918, the People's Commissariat of Military Affairs also ordered the creation of a financial department of VBVK.¹² In comparison with the communication services department, the financial department was relatively small, numbering only three people.¹³

Even with these two new departments, VBVK would still appear to have been run largely on a skeletal basis. Looking through the Soviet military and political press of the period from July-September 1918, there is very little indication of VBVK's activity and whilst, as will be detailed later, VBVK did help to organise the First All-Russian Congress of Military Commissars, nevertheless it certainly was not in a particularly strong position to do too much about unifying or coordinating the activities of the military commissars.

However, by the autumn of 1918, things began to change. On the basis of the decision of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee to turn the Republic into an "armed camp", the Revolutionary Military Soviet of the

Republic was duly created on 6th September 1918 (hereinafter referred to simply by the English transliteration of its Russian abbreviation, RVSR).¹⁴ RVSR was to be the centralised, operational military centre for the young Republic in its fight for survival, against the combined military might of external intervention and internal counter-revolution. By the end of September 1918, RVSR was further strengthened by the decision to abolish the Supreme Military Soviet and transfer its not inconsiderable operational powers to RVSR. This change in the military structure of the Republic soon found expression in the organisational structure and general position of VBVK in the overall military and political structure of the Republic.

On the 25th September 1918, the People's Commissariat of Military Affairs decided that VBVK should establish training courses for military commissars and, needless to say, a new department had to be created to take charge of them.¹⁵ Although it is not the place to discuss these courses here, suffice it to say that the new department that was created to look after them added a further 22 people to VBVK's overall staff numbers.¹⁶

Despite the creation of this new department, however, VBVK was still far from being the undisputed leading organ for the control of political work being carried out in the Red Army units at the front. On 2nd October 1918, a

Political department, attached to RVSR, was created.¹⁷

The creation of this "alternative" leader has prompted one prominent Soviet military historian to write the following:

another attempt was made to divide the leadership of political work in the Red Army. For leading and directing political work and the activity of the military commissars in the army, in the field and in the central military establishments, a Political department of the Revolutionary Military Soviet of the Republic was created. The All-Russian Bureau of Military Commissars was now left with leading the commissars of the rear units and issuing instructions to them.^{17a}

The head of this Political department was I.N.Smirnov, a Bolshevik with a Party record that stretched back to long before the 1917 October Revolution.¹⁸ Similar to Yurenev in the sense that he had also agitated in the ranks of the old Imperial Army during the First World War, Smirnov also had one big advantage over Yurenev-his Party card stretched back way beyond 1913; Smirnov had been a member of the Bolshevik Party since 1907 and had not been mixed up in any way in any fractional activity either within or without the Party. In establishing, or at least in attempting to establish relations with Chiefs of political departments at front-and army-level, this could well have been no mean advantage.

This division of the central political apparatus of the Red Army in two-the Political department in charge of the front political apparatus and VBVK left in charge of

the rest-shows that the Party's CC was still very unsure as to what organisational structure was needed at the centre to take effective control of the Red Army's political apparatus, both at the centre and in the rear. Only one Soviet historian has even remotely attempted to explain why this division occurred:

uniformity and centralisation were lacking in the area of leading the activity of the political departments themselves...basically, the leading role of the All-Russian Bureau of Military Commissars influenced political work in the rear military districts; in relation to the front political departments, its influence was insignificant.¹⁹

In other words, the decision to create RVSR's Political department was taken in response to the situation which was then developing at the front. The lack of influence of VBVK at the front, where it mattered most, had compelled the Bolsheviks at the centre to re-examine the whole situation and this eventually led to the decision to create a Political department, in charge of the front political apparatus.

Again though, events were to move swiftly and the Red Army's central political apparatus was to be thrown into new turmoil. On 9th October 1918, just one week after the original decision to create RVSR's Political department, RVSR published a new set of regulations, increasing the size and functions of VBVK.²⁰ In the new order, it was also made clear that VBVK was no longer subordinate to the

People's Commissariat of Military Affairs but was, in the words of the original order, "one of the central organs of the Revolutionary Military Soviet of the Republic."²¹ In general, the decree listed all the commissars who were now subject to the control of VBVK-these included all the commissars operating in the military commissariats, created by the decree of 8th April 1918; all commissars operating in the main okrug administrations; commissars of the internal security troops, etc.²² What has to be said here right away is that the new set of regulations would not appear to have touched upon the relationship between the commissars serving on the front and VBVK-all the commissars listed in the new set of regulations were serving in the rear of the Red Army, not at the front.

This new order also discussed the new organisational structure of VBVK, as well as the actual Chairmanship of VBVK.²³ As regards the latter, the order simply stated that the Chairman was a member of RVSR-following the reorganisational shake-up of RVSR, carried out on 30th September 1918, this had already occurred.²⁴ The order also stated that "members of the Bureau were departmental chiefs"²⁵ and that "at the head of the departments of the Bureau is a directorate and a secretariat."²⁶ Other than this new directorate and secretariat, VBVK was also to consist of the following departments: inspectorate-instructorate; field counter-espionage; administrative;

agitational-educational; military communications; finance/accounts; courses for military commissars and, finally, communication services["sluzhba svyazi"-SM].²⁷ With reference to this order, on 28th October 1918, RVSR issued another order which showed how many members of staff were to be in each of the new departments: thus, the secretariat was to consist of 4 people; the directorate was to consist of 19 people; the finance and administration departments-15 people; the inspectorate-instructorate department-36 people; the department of courses for the military commissars-22 people; the department of military communications-36 people; the agitation-education department-13 people; the agitation-organisation sub-department-6 people; the educational sub-department-16 people; the literary-library sub-department-12 people; the sub-department for agitators and organisers-16 people; the department of communication services-55 people and, finally, the department in charge of the publication of VBVK's own Bulletin-16 people.²⁸ This represented an overall staff total of 281 people-a massive increase on the original staff list of May 1918 and probably an indication of things to come.

Unfortunately, there is no such information available on the organisational complexity of RVSR's Political department: looking through the papers of the period, there simply is nothing there which would help to throw

light on the work or the structure of RVSR's Political department. In many respects, this similar to the previous situation previously described for VBVK between July-September 1918.

Further to the relevant orders on the October organisational shake-up of VBVK, another announcement appeared in the Soviet military press about a number of the newly-appointed departmental chiefs of VBVK:

IN execution of the order of the Revolutionary Military Soviet of the Republic No.49 of 9th October 1918, the following are appointed members of the All-Russian Bureau of Military Commissars:
in charge of the Bureau's directorate, com.Sovkin, L.S.; secretary to the Chairman of the Bureau, com.Khitev, V.K.; chief of the administration department, com.Kulyabko, N.N.; chief of the inspectorate-instructorate department, com. Ananin, I.A.; chief of the department of military communications, com. Arnoldov, A.M.; chief of the department of courses for the military commissars, com. Aksenov, I.A.²⁹

In this context, it should be noted that, according to an earlier order, Kulyabko had been appointed Yurenev's deputy, whilst the latter was out of Moscow in October 1918.³⁰ Unfortunately, it has not been possible to find any biographical information on any of these figures. In addition to the above personnel list, another of the departmental posts was filled on 26th October 1918:

in addition to order No.57 of 15th October of this year of the All-Russian Bureau of Military Commissars, the chief³¹ of the agitation-education department is com. Kasparova.

That is a name that we will come across in various future sections and for which there is, thankfully, some biographical information on. However, one thing that should be said about her here and now is that of all the people identified as having worked with VBVK during 1918-1919, only one name is then subsequently clearly identified as proceeding to work in the organ that succeeds VBVK, namely the Political administration of the Revolutionary Military Soviet of the Republic (PUR) and that is Kasparova.

Thus, by the end of October 1918, VBVK was bigger and organisationally more complex than it had been previously in its history, but it was still far from being recognised as the leading organ for the conduct of political work in the Red Army units at the front. After all, there was still the looming presence of RVSR's Political department, as well as the political department of the Supreme Military Inspectorate.³² However, this was all to change fairly quickly when the CC decided, at long last, to bite the bullet and officially confirm that VBVK was now to be viewed as the leading organ for the political work both at the front and in the rear of the Red Army.

On 13th November 1918, RVSR issued an order "on the merger of the Political department of RVSR with the All-Russian Bureau of Military Commissars".³³ The order is far from complete and, other than stating that the two

departments were to be fused, simply stated that VBVK, in order to handle the new work being placed on it, was to create a front department³⁴ and that VBVK was now in charge of all the commissars who had earlier been controlled by RVSR's Political department.³⁵ Fast on the heels of that order, on 14th November 1918, RVSR issued yet another order fusing VBVK and the Supreme Military Inspectorate's Political department, taking over its staff and, no doubt, its main function of inspecting political work being carried out on the front.³⁶

Thus, within the space of a couple of days, VBVK had effectively become the leading organ for political work in the Red Army-all other contenders had been eliminated. On the same day as the announcement came through of the merger of RVSR's Political department and VBVK, it was also announced that VBVK's Front department had been duly created.³⁷ This was probably to ensure that the continuity of the work being undertaken remained unbroken. However, even so, the relationship between VBVK and the front political apparatus, despite all the reorganisation and merging of the central political apparatus, was still to remain a very serious problem for VBVK to tackle.

As will be detailed in the sections ahead, VBVK was to suffer a great deal from the lack of a properly defined relationship with the military commissars, the Party cells and the ever-increasingly powerful political departments.

In December 1918, a further two departments were created for VBVK-on 5th December 1918, the records-assignment and information departments were brought into being.³⁸ The records-assignment department was to consist of 11 people and the information department was to consist of 26 people.³⁹ Although no functions are actually listed in the original order creating these two departments, according to one secondary source, the records-assignment department would appear to have been a potentially very important department indeed. Apparently, this department was concerned with "sending out Party workers to the fronts, as well as the appointment of military commissars."⁴⁰ Given the nature of the department, it is very surprising that it took so long for such a department to be created! Its functions were nothing but vital for the new work of VBVK.

A week after the creation of these two new departments, VBVK issued an order on "the organisational set-up for cultural-educational work in the Red Army units located at the front."⁴¹ The opening sentence of the order stated the following:

the leading centre for the organisation and leadership of cultural-educational work in the whole of the Red Army is the Agitation-education department of the All-Russian Bureau of Military Commissars; the closest leading organ for the troops, at the front, is the Political department, attached to the Staff of the Army.⁴²

In one single statement, VBVK virtually announced the organ that was effectively to become its real challenger to its position as the leading organ for political work in the Red Army units, especially at the front. The Army and Front political departments, as will be described in various places of this dissertation, were to become the leading organs for political work at the front, with almost the minimum of interference from VBVK.

Although VBVK had 4 months of activity left, in many respects, it was an organ that was ill-equipped for the burdens and duties that lay ahead of it. According to one source, VBVK was reorganised "10 times", and this in just a year of existence.⁴³ From a staff of less than 25 in May 1918, it had grown enormously by the end of autumn 1918 but, from the evidence presently available, it certainly would appear that VBVK was simply not up to taking on all the extra work that becoming the leading organ for political work in the Red Army meant. Its Achilles heel was its relationship with the front political apparatus and despite the increase in staff and, no doubt, budget allocation, VBVK's relationship with the front political apparatus was never really properly worked out.

In the sections that follow, VBVK's delicate relationship with the Red Army's front political apparatus will be both detailed and analysed and, on the basis of a

lot of primary source material, some of which has never been seen outside the USSR, it will be possible for the first time in the West to critically analyse and evaluate the nature of the relationship between the central and front political apparatus.

NOTES(1):-

1. P.A. Golub, "Kogda byl uchrezhden institut voennykh komissarov Krasnoi Armii?" ('Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal'. M.1962, pt.4, p.157).

2. Ibid.

3. "Dekrety Sovetskoi vlasti", vol.2. M.1959, pp.63-70.

4. "Izvestiya Sovetov rabochikh, soldatskikh i krestianskikh deputatov gor. Moskvy i Moskovskoi oblasti." 10.4.1918.

5. For biographical information, see the appendix at the end of this dissertation.

6. "Izvestiya Narodnogo Komissariat po Voennym Delam", 10.5.1918.

7. "Izvestiya Sovetov rabochikh...", 11.6.1918.

8. "Partiino-politicheskaya rabota v Krasnoi Armii (aprel 1918-fevral 1919). Dokumenty." Vol.1, M.1961, p.77.

9. "Kraniy Arkhiv", vol.1 (86), M.1938, pp.49-55.

10. Ibid.

11. "Izvestiya Narodnogo Komissariata...", 18.5.1918.

12. Ibid., 28.5.1918.

13. Ibid.

14. "Dekrety Sovetskoi...", vol.3, M.1964, pp.372-3.

15. "Izvestiya Narodnogo Komissariata...", 27.9.1918.

16. Ibid., 31.10.1918.

17. ^{FAA} Yu. P. Petrov, "KPSS-rukovoditel i vospiatel Krasnoi Armii (1918-1920 gg)." M.1961. p.17.

18. See the relevant biographical appendix.

19. A. Geronimus, "Partiya i Krasnaya Armiya. Istoricheskii ocherk." M.1928, p.40.

20. "Izvestiya Narodnogo Komissariata...", 13.10.1918.

NOTES(2):-

21."Izvestiya Narodnogo Komissariata...", 13.10.1918.

22.Ibid., 13.10.1918.

23.Ibid.

24.S.S.Khromov, "Grazhdanskaya voina i voennaya interventsia v SSSR. Entsiklopedia." M.1983, p.495.

25."Izvestia Narodnogo Komissariata...", 13.10.1918.

26.Ibid.

27.Ibid.

28.Ibid., 31.10.1918

29.Ibid.

30.Ibid., 10.10.1918.

31.Ibid., 30.10.1918.

32.There is very little information on the duties or the workings of the Supreme Military Inspectorate's Political department: all that can be gleamed from what little there is is that it carried out a series of inspection tours of political work at the front. (See "Partiino-politicheskaya rabota...", vol.1, pp.84-5).

33."Partiino-politicheskaya rabota...", vol.1, p.89.

34.Ibid.

35.Ibid.,

36.The fate of the Military-political section is unclear.

37.P.I.Gridasov, "Sozdanie partiino-politicheskogo apparata Krasnoi Armii v period deyatelnosti Vserossiskogo buro voennykh komissarov (aprel 1918-aprel 1919)." Avtoreferat, Leningrad, 1973, p.17.

38."Izvestiya Narodnogo Komissariata...", 10.12.1918.

39.Ibid.

40.Petrov, ibid., p.158.

NOTES(3):-

41."Polozhenia i instruktsii po postanovke politicheskoprosvetitelnoi raboty v Krasnoi Armii.", M.1919, pp.48-52.

42.Ibid., p.48.

43.P.Kuzmin, "Politorgany Krasnoi Armii v period grazhdanskoi voiny." ('Partiino-politicheskaya rabota v RKKA'), No.1, M.1939, p.50).

CHAPTER TWO(SECTION TWO):

VBVK AND THE ROLE OF THE MILITARY COMMISSARS IN THE RED ARMY (APRIL 1918-APRIL 1919).

Before examining the role of the military commissar in the Red Army and his relationship to VBVK in 1918-1919, it would be worthwhile, initially at least, to look at the various definitions of the term, "military commissar". After all, the various definitions on offer, varying in their complexity and accuracy, do reveal one important point about the nature of the role of the military commissars at this time-without the use of a long and detailed definition of the term, it is almost impossible to pinpoint exactly the powers and duties of the military commissars. Although VBVK was supposed to ensure a general degree of coordination and unity in the work of the military commissars, it was never able to ensure an effective measure of control over the activities of the military commissars, en masse and, in some respects, in this its primary duty, has to be judged as having failed. However, what this section will hopefully show is that VBVK had to face an immense task in trying to establish some form of control over the total activities of the military commissars in the Red Army, given the complexity

of the functions of the latter and, more importantly, the fact that, for a time at least, their powers were almost unlimited. VBVK found it impossible to enforce a commonly-agreed set of general statutes on the work of the military commissars in the Red Army, due, in no small part, to the fact that the military commissars were more powerful without a commonly-agreed set of general instructions than with such a set. As will be shown below, one of the explanations for the power and influence of the military commissars in the Red Army units, at this time, was the fact that their powers were so ill-defined that they could encroach on a whole range of spheres of activity. If their range of activity had been properly defined and regulated, then, obviously, their power and influence would also have been limited. Given its lack of influence at the front, VBVK had very little choice but to accept this state of affairs and let it continue.

Thus, in the section that follows, the overall role of the military commissar in the Red Army and the relationship with VBVK will be examined and analysed. VBVK's role in the appointment, training and despatch of commissars to the front will be detailed, as well as the general work of the commissars in the Red Army, at this time.

(i) What was a "military commissar"?

However, as stated in the introduction, the section will begin by looking at the various definitions of the term, "military commissar", in order to arrive at some sort of general understanding of the nature of the role of the military commissars in the Red Army.

A very general definition of the term is to be found in the relevant volume of the "Sovetskaya Voennaya Entsiklopediya":

a figure in the armed forces, endowed by the government or ruling Party, with special powers.¹

In itself, this particular definition does not say too much, but, in its vagueness, curiously enough, lies part of the explanation behind an understanding of the power and influence of the military commissars in the Red Army. As already stated, the military commissars were more powerful without a strict series of regulations and rules, than they would have been had VBVK been able to enforce a generally-agreed set of regulations. Such a definition, as above, would also cover the work of the commissars in the army, who existed, in one form, whilst the Provisional Government was in power, in March 1917.² Although it should be said that the military commissars, who operated in the Red Army in 1918-1919 were not only greater in

number, but also had more power to wield. Thus, the definition, as noted, is adequate to a certain extent: it is true that commissars were agents of a particular ruling Party, operating in the Red Army. However, in terms of the military and political experience of the young Soviet Republic, such a definition gives no real indication of the influence or power, held by the military commissars in the Red Army during the latter's formative period. In effect, the definition is too slight, too clinical. In order to better understand the role of the military commissar in the Red Army and, therefore, appreciate his overall importance, it is necessary to examine yet one more definition of the term, this time taken from an encyclopaedia, devoted to the history of the Civil War itself:

official-representatives of the Communist Party and Soviet power in the Red Army and Fleet...the institution of military commissars was introduced in the spring of 1918, with the aim of securing the leading role of the Communist Party in the Army and in the Navy, organising Party-political work amongst the troops...and also controlling the activity of the military specialists...for coordinating and uniting the activity of the military commissars and establishing control over them on a nationwide scale, on the basis of a directive of the People's Commissariat of Military Affairs of 3rd April 1918...on 8th April was created the All-Russian Bureau of Military Commissars.³

Obviously, this definition of the term is more accurate and detailed and gives a greater impression of the functions and duties of the military commissars. However,

on saying that part of this definition has to be treated with a degree of caution; after all, as will be detailed below, the idea that all military commissars, serving in the Red Army at that time, were busy beaver away to secure the Bolshevik Party leadership of the Red Army would be, to say the least, somewhat of an exaggeration, especially in the early stages of the development of the Red Army (even as late as September 1918, VBVK still insisted that compulsory Communist Party membership was not necessary for military commissars).⁴ Therefore, Khromov's definition, whilst being more detailed and accurate, still does not portray a full picture of the position and work of the commissars in the Red Army in 1918.

Not too surprisingly, the single, most comprehensive "definition" of the role and functions of the military commissars appeared in an order of the People's Commissariat of Military Affairs, dated 6th April 1918, it was the first time that the People's Commissariat of Military Affairs had actually published an order on the duties of the military commissars, although in March 1918, it had approved a series of "basic statements" on the role and the activity of the military commissars,⁵ which were then subsequently writ large, so to speak, in the April 1918 order. The most important part of the April 1918 order was the following:

the military commissar is the direct political organ of Soviet power in the army...Commissars are appointed from the number of irreproachable revolutionaries, capable in the most difficult of circumstances of carrying out their revolutionary duty. The person of the commissar is inviolable...force against a commissar is equivalent to the most severe crime against Soviet power. The military commissar sees that the army does not isolate itself from the whole Soviet system and that separate military institutions do not become conspiratorial centres...the commissar takes part in all the activity of the military leaders...only those orders of the Military Soviets are valid which are signed by, other than the military leader, at least one military commissar. All work is conducted under the eyes of the commissars, but leadership in the specific military arena belongs not to the commissar but, working hand in hand with him, the military specialist.⁶

Compared with the previous definitions, the description of the powers of the commissar and his not compulsory

Bolshevik Party status, contained in this extract from the order of 6th April, gives us a truer indication of how the role of the military commissar was then viewed.

Contrary to Khromov's definition, the commissars were not necessarily conducting any campaigns of agitational-propaganda work in favour of the Bolshevik Party alone; the commissars were representatives of Soviet power-as yet, the two were still not the same thing. His main duty lay in ensuring that the army did not become a haven for conspiratorial plots to be hatched against the new revolutionary regime. This was crucial if the Bolsheviks were serious in their desire to create an army, that was not only capable of fighting the enemy, but also loyal to the regime; the commissars had to carefully watch the activities of the military specialists in their units. In

this particular respect, it is even possible to see a slight link between the commissars appointed by the Provisional Government in March 1917, the commissars appointed by the Petrograd Military Revolutionary Committee in the immediate aftermath of the 1917 October Revolution and the latest set of commissars serving in the units of the Red Army in the spring of 1918: as regards ensuring the loyalty of the army to the regime, all three sets of commissars had a control function to perform, in making sure that the military specialists, they were designed to cooperate with, did nothing that endangered the regime.

Again contrary to Khromov's definition, there is no mention in the order of the commissars carrying out any programme of political work in the Red Army units now, or in the future. The control function of the commissars was the most important function that the commissars had to perform and, judging by the lack of even a mention of the necessity, or the desire, that the commissars should perform some form of political work amongst the soldiers, the control function of the commissars must have been uppermost in the minds of the leading Bolshevik Party members, who drew up the order. Given the conditions of the time, the above approach would have made sense. After all, VBVK still did not formally exist and, even when it did, it would take quite some time, before it could even

attempt to impose some form of control over the military commissars.

(ii) The initial experience of VBVK and the military commissars (April-May 1918)

Towards the end of the above order, there is a mention of a "Bureau of Military Commissars" that was to be created under the control of the Supreme Military Soviet, "to unite the activity of the commissars, respond to their requests, work out instructions for them and, in case of necessity, convene Congresses of commissars."⁷ To all intents and purposes, this would seem a reference to VBVK, except for the fact that, according to the order, the Bureau was supposed to be subordinated to the Supreme Military Soviet and not the People's Commissariat of Military Affairs. One likely explanation is that events overtook the order, ie, that the order was published before any final decision had been made on the organisation or function of VBVK, or its relationship to the other military organs, operating in the Soviet Republic. After all, it should be remembered that VBVK was created just two days after the publication of the order, so there would appear to be a strong case for

arguing that the two events were obviously linked. As detailed in the order, the single most important function of the commissars, serving in the units of the Red Army, at this time, was ensuring that the necessary commands of the commanders were carried out to the best of everyone's ability and that the commanders themselves were loyal to the regime. In both of these duties, pronouncements from VBVK were not required; indeed, even if they were, VBVK would not have appeared to have issued any such statements. In the early days of the operation of VBVK, it would appear that the latter did not enjoy a particularly strong relationship with the commissars at the front. In fact, if one examines the earliest known statement on the organisational structure of VBVK (published in May 1918-see previous section), then there is no specific department, designed to handle the affairs of the commissars at the front, as a specific group. Of course, the situation was not helped much by the relatively small number of personnel at VBVK's disposal (only 30 in May 1918), and it would have been difficult for VBVK to devote any particularly real time, or effort, instructing and/or coordinating the work of the commissars at the front.

(iii) VBVK and the work of the First All-Russian Congress
of Military Commissars (June 1918)

Hence, the first real sign of activity, on VBVK's part that is, between the commissars and VBVK took place a few months after the formal creation of VBVK, in June 1918 to be exact, when VBVK announced the convening of the First All-Russian Congress of Military Commissars, to be held in Moscow.⁸ As will be shown below, this was an important congress, representing the first real attempt by VBVK to impose a degree of coordinated activity on the total work of the commissars, on a nationwide scale. Needless to say, the whole work of the congress has been virtually ignored by Soviet historians and, other than a few references to it here and there, what follows next has had to be gleaned virtually entirely from newspaper accounts of the period, with all the attendant advantages and disadvantages. In an announcement which appeared in the newspaper, "Izvestiya Sovetov rabochikh i krestyanskikh deputatov gor. Moskvyy i Moskovskoi oblasti", the basic aims of the congress were set out:

with the aim of coordinating the activities of the military commissars and the elucidation of the state of affairs in the localities, on 6th June in Moscow will be convened the All-Russian Congress of Military Commissars.⁹

The announcement then went on to state who would attend

the congress and the conditions that the commissars would have to face, as well as a number of other points to do with the work of the congress:

at the congress will attend okrug, guberniya, uezd and unit commissars. In those places where there are two commissars operating, only one need attend the congress. To all who will attend the congress, it is suggested that they bring with them a supply of food for the entire length of the congress, so as not to overburden Moscow. According to available evidence, at the request of the Bureau have replied commissars from many parts of Russia; only commissars from Vladivostok are still due to respond. At the present moment, work is going at a feverish pace in preparation for the congress, which will not have a political character about it, but be purely business-like.¹⁰

The latter statement is, arguably, the most interesting in the whole announcement, as it probably was an attempt to hide the growing difficulties that were being experienced in the political and governmental alliance between the Bolsheviks and the Left SRs, at this time. As will be described below, both political parties had the greatest number of delegates at the congress and, had there been an open split between the two parties at the congress, this would possibly have seriously impaired the work of the congress, if not ruined it altogether. What VBVK seems to have been hinting at in the latter statement, in particular, is the wish that the congress was not to be a political forum, with the two main political parties present scoring political points off one another, but more an open, serious discussion of views and ideas on the work

of the commissars, both serving at the front and in the rear.

As shown in the last section, VBVK was not an avowedly Party organ, that is, it was not subordinated, unlike its successor, PUR, to the Party's Central Committee or any other high-ranking political organ of the state.

Initially, it was subordinated to the People's Commissariat of Military Affairs, and then RVSR, both predominantly military organs. Therefore, at this time, and later, VBVK would appear to have been more keen in achieving practical results in the work of the military commissars than, for instance, ensuring their total ideological purity to the Bolshevik Party. VBVK wanted the congress to be a proper forum, where each of the delegates could comment on their experiences and suggest areas for improvement, rather than allowing the congress to deteriorate into "Bolshevik-bashing" or "Left SR-bashing". Whether or not VBVK succeeded in its wish will be shown below.

In a report, published in "Izvestiya Sovetov rabochikh...", on the first day's work of the congress, it stated that "275 okrug, guberniya, etc., commissars" attended the opening session.¹¹

The Party-affiliation of these delegates, rounded up to the nearest ten, was given as 100 Communists, 30 Left SRs and the rest were either non-Party members, or their

political status was not known.¹² However, research by one Soviet historian of the Red Army's political apparatus during the Civil War allows us a more comprehensive picture as regards the total number of delegates and their political allegiance. According to Yu.P.Petrov, there were 359 delegates, of whom 271 were members of the Bolshevik Party, 55 were Left SRs, 8 represented various other political parties and the remaining 25 either represented no political party or their political affiliation was unclear.¹³ Thus, according to these figures, the Bolsheviks had the overwhelming majority of delegates, (more than 75%) but, even so, this still left a sizable minority of delegates who did not owe their political allegiance to the Bolshevik Party. Within this particular faction, over 62% of the delegates belonged to the Left SRs. If these figures were indicative of the state of affairs at the front and in the rear, as regards the political composition of the military commissars on the whole, then VBVK's desire that the congress remain non-political was well-grounded. Unfortunately, without access to the proper archival sources, it is presently impossible to even speculate on the political composition of all the military commissars in the Republic at this time.

According to another newspaper report of the opening day of the congress, the latter was chaired by Yurenev,



who announced the composition of the congress' praesidium, reflecting the political composition of the majority of the delegates at the congress, being divided into Bolshevik and Left SR factions.¹⁴ Representing the Bolsheviks on the praesidium were Dzevaltovsky, Yurenev himself, Pyzhov, Muralov and Yaroslavsky.¹⁵ The faction then decided to elect the following as secretaries to the praesidium-Pavlov, Arioldov and Baykov.¹⁶ For their part, the Left SRs appointed to the praesidium two members-Yegorov and Poplavsky-and one secretary-Zhitev.¹⁷ As regards biographical information on the main members of the praesidium, then the situation on the Bolshevik membership is not too bad, but a different picture emerges when trying to find details on the Left SR membership. The possible sole exception arises with the identity of the Yegorov listed as belonging to the Left SR faction of the praesidium. One very prominent member of the Left SR Party, at this time, was a former colonel in the Tsarist Army, A.I.Yegorov, and it could well be that the Yegorov listed as being a member of the congress' praesidium was the self-same colonel.

If this was the case, then it would represent an interesting parallel with one of the Bolshevik members of the praesidium-Dzevaltovsky, himself a former staff captain of a grenadier regiment in the old Tsarist army.¹⁸ This would seem to indicate that both the Bolsheviks and

the Left SRs felt it necessary to include the views and experience of the military specialists directly on the congress' praesidium. Thus, even at a congress devoted to analysing the work and experience of the military commissars, the views of the military specialists were not to be ignored or left out, thereby displaying a certain degree of reciprocity in the relationship between the two.

The congress began its opening session with a fairly lengthy speech by Trotsky. Trotsky began his speech by stressing the importance of the congress:

Comrades! We are attending a congress here of exceptional importance, the Parties, represented at this congress, have a great revolutionary past. At this present moment in time, we are learning and we must learn how to build our own revolutionary socialist army...a task...organised on the basis of comradely trust and...revolutionary discipline.¹⁹

In stating that the political parties at the congress had a "great revolutionary past" and that the army had to be built on the principle of "comradely trust", Trotsky was, in actual fact, re-emphasising the non-partisan nature of the congress, that it was to be an open forum for the discussion of various ideas and views on the work of the commissars in the Red Army. His first direct comment on the work of the commissars may, on first sight, seem odd:

one of the most important tasks which has fallen to the lot of the military commissar is, by means of ideological

propaganda, *to fill* the labouring masses ("trudovye massy") with the need for revolutionary order and discipline.²⁰

In itself, this could easily have been a reference to the work of the military commissars working either at the front or in the rear. After all, both sets of commissars would have to be involved in such propaganda work, convincing those both in the Red Army and those joining the Red Army to do their socialist, revolutionary duty. Following on from this statement, Trotsky then looked back somewhat at a slightly earlier period in the history of the Red Army and discussed the disorder that had existed in the Red Army before the creation of the local commissarial system in the Soviet Republic in April 1918:

everyone knows that before [April 1918-SM] in the localities, chaos reigned which, in its turn, created terrible disorder for us at the centre. We know that many of our military commissars often expressed their dissatisfaction with the central authority, in particular the Military Commissariat...Very often, we received... telegrams demanding money, but no estimates were attached to the telegrams.²¹

Chaos and disorder would appear to have reigned in the system before the creation of the military commissariats, which were introduced not only to help raise the necessary manpower, in order to organise an effective defence against the forces of internal counter-revolution and foreign intervention, but also, it would seem from Trotsky's speech, to help introduce a vital degree of organisational stability and discipline in the military

apparatus, as a whole. In attempting to introduce a measure of control over the work of the military commissars, VBVK would also seem to have had a role to play in the disciplining of the military apparatus itself. However, it should not be forgotten that the latter could only have been put into proper effect, when VBVK had managed to introduce a degree of control over the work of the commissars, both those working at the front and those working in the local commissariats.

In another comment on the work of the military commissars at the front, Trotsky made the following single reference, in his entire speech, to something approaching the term, "cultural-educational" work. It is almost a casual reference to the latter, in actual fact:

on the responsibility of the commissar is the unremitting work...of raising the level of consciousness in the midst of the Army. ²²

There is no mention of the role of VBVK, as regards the work of the commissars, no mention either of the role of VBVK in helping the commissars to raise the level of consciousness in the Red Army. Instead, Trotsky spent a large part of his speech discussing the really key issue of the day-the relationship of the military commissar to the military specialist in the Red Army. Reminiscent of the earlier order of 6th April 1918, Trotsky had this to

say about the general position of the commissar in the Red Army:

the commissar is the direct representative of Soviet power in the army, the defender of the interests of the working-class. If he does not interfere in military operations, this is only because he is standing over every military specialist, watching their activities, controlling each of their steps. The commissar is a political figure, a revolutionary. The military specialist answers with his head for every move of his, for the outcome of military operations. If the commissar sees the threat of danger to the revolution from the military specialist, then the commissar has the right to mercilessly deal with the counter-revolutionary, including execution.²³

As stated above, Trotsky's speech contained a number of comments that reflected what had been previously issued in the order of 6th April 1918. Again, the emphasis was not emphasising the predominantly Bolshevik-nature of the majority of the commissars. Trotsky was obviously aware that a significant minority of the delegates were not Bolshevik Party members and that, similar to the situation both at the front and in the rear, the Bolsheviks would have to rely on commissarial work being carried out by non-Bolshevik Party members for some time to come. No harm could be wrought if Trotsky, or anyone else for that matter, dubbed the commissars as being representatives of Soviet power in the Red Army-at the time, saying that did not imply that the commissars were automatically working in the best interests of the Bolshevik Party; Soviet power was still not the sole preserve of the Bolshevik Party.

After Trotsky's speech, the congress then proceeded to

vote on a number of honorary chairmen-namely, Lenin, Adler, Liebknecht, Trotsky and Spiridonova.²⁴ Yurenev then announced the agenda for the rest of the work of the congress:

reports from the localities, the duties and responsibilities of the military commissars and the committees of the Red Army units, cultural-educational work in the Red Army.²⁵

Thus, despite Trotsky's virtual ignorance of the topic in his speech, the congress did decide to discuss the position of cultural-educational work in the Red Army but, given the overall importance of the duties of the military commissars, it was the latter topic that was to dominate the rest of the debate at the congress. Following Yurenev's announcement and Muralov's speech (Muralov was then Chief of the Moscow Military District at this time²⁶) according to the relevant newspaper report of the period, the rest of the first day of the congress was spent listening to a number of reports from the provinces:

from all the reports, it is obvious that, in the provinces, a strong lack of experienced workers is felt and that it is necessary to adopt swift measures for the planned organisation of the revolutionary army on the basis of comradely discipline and mutual trust.²⁷

Obviously, it would have been much more useful had the newspaper noted a few of the details of the various reports read at the congress, on the first day's work. However, before leaving the first day's work of the

congress altogether, it would be worthwhile to look back at the final statement again, in order to arrive at a understanding of what was meant by the latter. Was the phrase, "the planned organisation of the revolutionary army on the basis of comradely discipline and mutual trust" code for something? Given the political nature of the delegates and the probability that a significant minority of the commissars elsewhere were not stalwart members of the Bolshevik Party, the phrase was probably a code, designed to keep everyone happy, so to speak. All the delegates had to be agreed on the necessity for the creation of a unified, disciplined military force, in order to defend the newly-created Soviet Republic.

The second day of the congress (8th June) was devoted entirely to reports from representatives of the provincial military commissariats. Judging from the newspaper reports, it would appear that the military commissars who spoke at the congress discussed the problem of the organisation of the Red Army and the difficulties that were being encountered.²⁸ The newspaper extracts contained the following interesting statements on the latter:

a number of the speakers expressed the desire of broadening the rights of the military commissars. Many representatives of the provincial military commissariats adhered to this view, arguing that the moment had come when it was time to break away from the principle of voluntarism.²⁹

The latter principle referred to in the extract-"voluntarism"-was that period in Red Army history when the peasants and workers of the Republic were not compelled to join the Red Army, but volunteered to carry out their military service. It could well have been the case that the commissars were indirectly condemning the indiscipline and partizanshchina that was prevalent in a number of the military units. In another newspaper report of the second day's work of the congress, this argument was further clarified:

representatives of the front-line military districts, in a number of reports, noted the extreme difficulty of organisational work in conditions when daily new units were being sent for immediate military activity.²⁹

It was also stated, at the congress, that the Urals okrug military commissariat had passed a resolution on the "uselessness of committees in the socialist army."³⁰

Unfortunately, the statement itself does not make clear exactly what committees the military commissariat had in mind-the most likely candidate were the soldiers' committees operating in various units of the Red Army, at the time. As will be discussed below, the soldiers' committees were not viewed in a particularly favourable light, by a number of the local and centralised political organs of the time.

A number of the speakers at the congress also talked about the need for the "creation of a cadre of instructors

from the very mass of the people"³¹ in order to cut down on the confusion between the military specialists and the ordinary rank and file soldier. As the relevant section of the newspaper report stated:

the specialists, who come to serve in the Red Army, understand poorly the spirit and tasks of the socialist army. In sending out such specialists, confusion does sometime arise, such as happened in Tsaritsyn uezd, where individual instructors began their courses by teaching the soldiers to sing... 'Our Fatherland' [the old Tsarist anthem-SM]".³²

Oddly enough, the commissars themselves did not seem to have grasped the fact that they, to all intents and purposes, were to act as the intermediaries, the bridge, so to speak, between the soldiers and the military specialists. One other point, as regards the above statement, whilst there was an obvious need for instructors to train and discipline the men, it would have been difficult to obtain sufficient enough numbers of such instructors from the working and peasant classes. It was also on this day, that the decision was taken to split the work of the congress into a number of sections, eg, cultural-educational, working out the necessary instructions on the rights of the military commissars, the relationship with the military specialists, etc.³²

The third day of the congress(10th June)was very much similar to the previous day's work of the congress-more reports from the provinces, in other words. Financial,

transport and supply problems were discussed, as well as a decision was taken to undertake "a much more careful selection of instructor-military leaders."³³

Unfortunately, the relevant newspaper report did not detail any of the problems or the content of the speeches, in which the problems were raised.

It was probably on this day that a small membership change in the composition of the congress' praesidium took place, as well. In the composition of the Left SR faction, Poplavsky was replaced by one of the leaders of the Left SRs in Moscow, Yu.V. Sablin, a future key figure of the Left SR July uprising in Moscow!³⁴ No reason is given as to why such a personnel change took place. After Yurenev had informed the congress of the change in personnel, he then addressed the congress himself. Unfortunately, his speech to the congress is only available in a paraphrased form but, even so, is worth examining. In his speech, Yurenev talked about the organisation of VBVK:

in conclusion, comrade Yurenev talked about the organisation of the All-Russian Bureau of Military Commissars. The Bureau has the task of uniting, scattered all over the provinces, volost, uezd, guberniya and okrug commissars into one harmonious whole for the joint leadership of the Red Army...comrade Yurenev called on all commissars to harmonious, joint work for the erection of a powerful, socialist Red Army...devoting to it all their strength, and with stern decisiveness...mercilessly crushing all encroachments on the revolution and its gains, wherever they may come from.³⁵

Yurenev's use of the word "joint" refers to what he probably envisaged as the union between VBVK and the military commissars in building the Red Army and ensuring that it remained loyal to the Soviet regime. Again, since the congress was apolitical, Yurenev's statement on uniting the commissars into "one harmonious whole" was intended to emphasise that all the commissars-regardless of their political persuasion-had an important role to play in the construction an leadership of the Red Army. In other words, Yurenev's speech, like Trotsky's and Muralov's before it, was a conciliatory one, especially in political terms. The lack of any mention of cultural-educational or political tasks of the military commissars was probably not accidental either; the Bolsheviks were probably still more inclined to the view that it would be safer to concentrate on the relationship of the military commissar to the military specialist, than analyse the tasks of the military commissars in other, more sensitive, areas.

It has not been possible to track down any record of the work of the fourth day of the congress(10th June)or its activity; the last day of the congress was the 11th June when, amongst other things, the congress heard the reports from the earlier created sections, including what had been worked out concerning the rights of the military commissars. As one newspaper report stated:

after prolonged sectional meetings, during which were worked out in detail the most important questions, including the plans for the organisation of the military commissariats, the plans of order ["plany poryadka"-SM] for the formation of the Red Army and, also. instructions, explaining the duties of the military commissars...and also questions of a cultural-educational nature-the congress met at a plenary session to hear the reports of the sections about their work.³⁶

According to another newspaper report, "all projects, worked out by the section[on the rights and duties of the military commissars-SM]...were approved by the plenum without debate."³⁷ Before discussing these draft proposals, on the rights and duties of the military commissars in detail, a number of other points have to be made concerning the last day of the congress itself. The actual organisational allegiance, so to speak, of VBVK was debated on the last day of the congress. According to one newspaper report, there were two proposals up for debate:

as the Bureau was elected by the congress, it should become, so to speak, its standing organ. The other suggestion was to retain...the existing organisational order of the All-Russian Bureau in the centre, in the People's Commissariat of Military Affairs; in such a way, the Bureau is one of the departments of the Commissariat. After the speeches of two delegates, one in favour of the first proposal, and the other in favour of the second, the latter proposal was adopted by the majority of the delegates.³⁸

This extract could well have been an example of the sign of an organisational dilemma, between the need for centralisation and popular control, with the need for centralisation being the victor. Unfortunately, it is impossible to say, at present, whether Bolshevik and Left SR

delegates split on the issue, with Bolsheviks being more inclined to accept the need for centralisation than, perhaps, the Left SR delegates. However, it is also not inconceivable that a number of the Left SR delegates found themselves supporting the measure that VBVK should remain a part of the centralised military apparatus, rather than being a creature of a congress. Without access to the relevant archival information, it is simply impossible to say how the congress delegates split on the issue.

There was also a report from the cultural-educational section, but what was actually in the report is still a mystery. All that can be found on the report is the following terse statement:

the basic regulations worked out by the section, on political and socialist education for the soldiers...were adopted without debate and will form the basis of work in this area.³⁹

The congress ended with Yurenev making the closing speech, "to thunderous applause" and all the delegates stood up to sing "The International"⁴⁰. And yet within one month of this rousing chorus of "The International" and an apparent show of unity amongst the delegates on many of the major points at the congress, the Left SRs staged their uprising in Moscow, assassinating the German ambassador there, Mirbach, and almost caused the young Soviet Republic to be even more heavily embroiled in the struggle for its survival. Following the July uprising, the position of

the Left SR commissars in the Red Army would appear to have been an awkward one, on the face of it, but, in a rare reference to the latter, one Soviet historian has pointed out their position would appear to have been relatively straightforward:

the majority of the Left SR commissars continued to work with the Bolsheviks even after the July Left SR uprising and a large part of them, within several weeks of the uprising, finally broke with the SRs.⁴¹

With the apparent emphasis of the congress to listen to the reports made by the commissars, operating either in the local military commissariats or at the front itself, then the congress can be judged to have been a success, at least in terms of the fact that the congress did achieve a practical forum for the debate of the actual work of the commissars. The congress did not lapse, as far as can be told, into a forum for each of the political parties present to attempt to score political points off one another. Given the political complexity of the congress delegates and, more importantly, what was to happen in the next month or so, this was, by no means, a insignificant achievement. The fact that the delegates would appear to have sat down and debated the work of the commissars in a relatively calm and orderly fashion is all credit to the preparatory work of VBVK and its top leadership.

There can be little doubt, as previously noted, that in the speeches of the main Bolshevik spokesmen-Trotsky,

Yurenev, Muralov, etc-nothing was said that could upset the political sensitivities of the non-Bolshevik Party delegates. Conciliation would appear to have been the order of the day, none of the main speakers-including the firebrand, Trotsky-apparently risked saying anything too controversial, in case it hampered the work of the congress, with potentially disastrous effects for the continuing process of the creation of the Red Army. Certainly, the Bolshevik delegates would appear to have been wary of the large minority of non-Bolshevik Party delegates; no one seems to have been prepared to take the risk of isolating the support of the other delegates in the discussion of the work or the functions of the military commissars.

The most important work of the congress, other than the achievement of a proper forum for the debate of the work of the military commissars, was the drafting and then publication of a set of "instructions on the military commissariats and the commissars."⁴² Compared to all other previous statements on the rights and duties of the military commissars, these instructions were much more detailed, although, on saying that, it should also be said that, like all other previous statements on the work of the military commissars, there was also a certain degree of vagueness about a number of the areas of the work of the commissars. In effect, this meant that the inst-

ructions could be used for the employ of all and every military commissar in the Red Army, irrespective of the latter's political persuasion, so long as he recognised Soviet power. This was a useful tool in ensuring that all the military commissars worked to strengthen and consolidate the military units in the Red Army. The instructions were made up of five sections: "a general part"; "the rights and duties of the military commissars"; "the inter-relationship of the military-administrative commissariats and the military soviets"; "statutes on the formation, administration and command of the superior military units" and, finally, "statutes on the military commissars."⁴³

In order to cut down on extraneous detail, only those sections of the instructions most relevant to the general body of the dissertation will be analysed and discussed below. The "general part" of the instructions contains a number of points, concerning the nature of the military commissars, his relationship to the military specialist, his responsibility to VBVK, etc.⁴⁴ Needless to say, the general part included a number of previously published statements on the general nature of the role of the military commissar:

1. The military commissar is the direct political organ of Soviet power, attached to the Army, and is a defender of the gains of the proletariat and the poorest peasantry.
2. On the commissar is placed all the burden for the creation of the Red Army. Therefore, the military

commissar must be an irreproachable revolutionary and a man of exceptional capabilities.

3. The military commissar is an inviolable person. Insult, or worse, force used against a military commissar whilst fulfilling his military duty will be equal to the severest crimes against Soviet power.⁴⁵

These first points are almost, word for word, a carbon copy of previous orders and statements on the general position of the commissar in the Red Army. Again, the emphasis is on stating that the commissar is, first and foremost, a representative of Soviet power and that, in the fulfilment of his duty, his person is inviolable. The commissars are to be appointed from the number of irreproachable revolutionaries, capable men, who must carry the heavy burden of playing a key role in the creation of the Red Army. All of these statements, in one form or another, we have met with earlier in our previous discussion of the role of the military commissars.

The next important series of points in this particular section immediately follows the points just quoted:

4. the main task of every military commissar is that he put his military establishment in that place, predetermined by the general plans of the state.

5. The military commissar answers for the trustworthiness of the work of the military leaders and the whole command staff.

6. The military commissar must skilfully use the military specialist for the purposes of the Soviet republic. For this, closely watching their work, he must not prevent them from carrying out their duty within the limits of their assigned powers.

7. Commissars and all military leaders... must maintain in the Red Army units and in the military institutions established order and strict revolutionary discipline, carrying out in practise the programmes of the People's Commissariat of Military Affairs and the decrees and

to maintain the necessary stability and discipline in the Red Army units and in the military apparatus of the Republic, as a whole.

(iv) The changing military situation and the role of the military commissars (June-September 1918)

However, due to the changing military situation, the role and functions of the military commissars were to be brought into still sharper focus. The armed resistance of the Czech legion in Siberia was, as far as the Bolsheviks were concerned, the forces of internal counter-revolution raising their ugly head and the Bolsheviks reacted accordingly. In order to combat this threat, the Council of People's Commissars created the Revolutionary Military Soviet [abbreviated to simply, RMS-SM] of the Eastern Front on 13th June 1918.⁴⁹ With the creation of this particular organ, all the relevant political and military organs were supposed to be combined in an effective way to combat the military threat, posed by the Czech legion. At the time, the Eastern front comprised the North-Urals-Siberian Front, the Urals Front, military units operating in the areas of Simbirsk-Surzan-Samara-Penza and around Kazan.⁵⁰ The latter detail is by no

means irrelevant; after all, it should be noted that the Red Army's first-ever political department was created and subordinated to the staff HQ of the North-Urals-Siberian Front on 20th June 1918, just a few weeks after the creation of the RMS of the Eastern Front.⁵¹ As will be shown in the relevant section of this chapter, the Red Army's political departments would play a significant role in the development of the Red Army's political apparatus- however, that is for description and analysis later on in this chapter.

Not long after the creation of the RMS of the Eastern Front, the latter issued a series of instructions to the military commissars, entitled "the struggle with the uprising of the Czech corps" on 27th June 1918.⁵² Representing, as they do, the first field instructions issued to the military commissars by a RMS and within a comparatively short time of the publication of the congress' instructions on the duties of the military commissars, these instructions, although brief, are interesting and worthy of examination.

Compared to the instructions issued by the congress, these instructions of the RMS of the Eastern Front were much more simple and direct:

2. The task of the political commissars [note the use of the term, "political commissar"-SM] and agitators is to ensure, by means of agitational, organisational and repressive measures, strict fulfilment of the orders of the Military-revolutionary soviet.

3.to the commissars is granted the right of summary punishment [of counter-revolutionaries-SM]and solving problems in the areas of their work.

In the military and political spheres, the military-political commissars have no restrictions.

4.The commissars must chose from the units, from reliable Party Red Army soldiers, shock groups, who will ensure their[the military commissars-SM]personal safety and the force for the fulfilment of these and other measures.

5.The commissars must play a very vital and direct part in the organisation of the staffs.⁵³

Similar to the instructions issued by the congress, this set of instructions emphasises the military nature of the duties of the military commissars, even their power of summary execution, when and where necessary. Again, there is no mention of any form of political or cultural-educational work to be carried out by the military commissars in the performance of their duties. it is interesting that for the personal safety of the commissars themselves, they are to rely on Party members-were Bolshevik Party soldiers safeguarding Left SR commissars? Round about the same time, an interesting article appeared in one of the central military newspapers of the period, in which the author analysed the experience of the soldiers' committees in the Red Army and found them wanting.⁵⁴ Although the article was primarily about the uselessness of the soldiers' committees the author (A.Poltavtsev) discussed the role of the military commissars in the Red Army and made the following interesting statements:

the political direction of the Army will be given by Party commissars...in their work, the PARTY[emphasis as in the original article-SM]commissars will rely on PARTY organisations and only those of the Communist Party which, it goes without saying, must be formed in all military units at all levels... All the threads of PARTY work must be placed in the hands of the Party commissar.⁵⁵

This article would seem to be a fairly direct call for the increased politicisation of the military commissars and, not only that, but a total reliance on Communist Party military commissars. Given the fact that the Left SR uprising had only taken place some two weeks before the article was published, it is perhaps not too surprising that, at least, one commentator should have called for the commissars to be used in the future to be of only one political persuasion. It is interesting, though, that there was such a strident call for the politicisation of the military commissars in the Red Army at such a, relatively speaking, early stage of the Civil War-an early indication of viewing the commissars as being more than mere watchdogs of the behaviour of the military specialists and the soldiers themselves.

On the 28th July 1918, RMS of the Eastern Front issued yet another order on the responsibilities of the commissars, this time as being models of "courage and heroism".⁵⁶ The order stated the following:

as political figures, revolutionaries, the military commissars by their own personal conduct must present a living example of revolutionary heroism, courage and steadfastness to the end.⁵⁷

In issuing this order, RMS of the Eastern Front must have had grounds for complaint, concerning the past examples of the courage of the military commissars. Things at the front must have shown that a number of the commissars were perhaps not as brave as they had to be, in order to inspire the men on to greater sacrifice. Elsewhere on the front, things were happening, as regards the duties of the military commissars. On 24th July 1918, the North-Caucasus Military District published a set of instructions on the creation of Party cells and the organisation of the Party in the military units.⁵⁸ Although there is a lot of detail in these instructions, which will be discussed later, the instructions did make mention of a selection procedure for military commissars within the district. Apparently, the Party cells were to select the commissars:

4. Each Party cell selects, from its midst, the best Party workers and sends them to the military organ for training in the work of the military commissars; after such training, a conference is to be convened with the city [Party-SM] committee and the conference selects from these workers the military commissars.⁵⁹

Whether this was a standard form for selecting the military commissars in all the other military districts is difficult to say. Given the lack of standardisation in other areas of the work of the military apparatus, it would be unlikely that there was only one method for the selection and training of military commissars. Certainly,

as will be described below, VBVK also played a role in the training of a number of military commissars and that should not be ignored. This was probably a selection procedure for one military district and, without access to the relevant archival source, it is impossible to gauge how successful this particular method was. However, what it does show is that, at least on the front, there was a steady and gradual process in the politicisation of the military commissars; they were gradually being viewed as creatures of the Bolshevik Party, despite VBVK's September protestation that commissars did not necessarily have to be Bolshevik Party members.

A further important step in the development of the Red Army's political apparatus at the front was the appointment of a "main political commissar" to 3rd Army (Eastern Front) on 1st September 1918—the man in question being the former Urals Military District's military commissariat, F.I. Goloshchekin.⁶⁰ According to the original order:

the main political commissar of the 3rd Army is answerable for all work in the area of 3rd Army, including in the rear up to Vyatka; to him is subordinate the political department of the staff of 3rd Army and, also, all other political departments and commissars in the region of 3rd Army, on all political matters, it is necessary to turn to c. Goloshchekin.⁶¹

Thus, judging by this order, the main political commissar was in charge of not only political work in 3rd

Army, but also in the region surrounding 3rd Army. All political departments and commissars were subordinated to his authority and, in the event of any political problems, they had to appeal to him for help and advice. He was also in charge of the appointment of commissars to his army or, at least, such appointments had to be made through him; either way, he was a figure of fairly extensive political power. It is unfortunate that nothing is mentioned concerning the authority and power of the local civilian Party apparatus, in such a case. Did Goloshchekin have report to his local Party HQ or soviet? If so, how often? If a dispute arose between these organs, who was allowed to prevail? The military or civilian power? One other important point about Goloshchekin's appointment is the appointment itself-it was not made by VBVK, but the relevant RMS itself. In general, this followed a distinct pattern, where Front and Army RMS appointed their own Front and Army-level commissars, whereas VBVK appointed the commissars serving in the rear or in the rear military districts.⁶² This would be an indication that, once again, the power of the centre at the front was very weak. VBVK simply did not seem to have the necessary resources to be able to impose its will on the political organs, working at the front.

Further development of the powers of the commissars came in another series of instructions issued on the

Eastern Front-on this occasion by the 2nd Army-"not earlier than the 9th September 1918."⁶³ According to the footnotes supplied with the instructions, S.I.Gusev is credited with drafting this particular set of instructions, a figure who was to become very prominent in the future development of the Red Army's political apparatus. At that time, Gusev was simply a member of the RMS of 2nd Army, working in its political department.⁶⁴ The instructions concern the responsibilities of the regimental commissars and detail the political functions of the regimental commissars. However, as usual, they begin with a number of platitudes about the "honoured" position of the commissar:

the regimental political commissar is the most honoured title in the regiment. For all Red Army soldiers, he must be an example of revolutionary and military valour, discipline, loyalty to military duty, first in battle, last to retreat-in a word, the spiritual leader of the regiment, the political, military and vital banner of the proletarian revolution. In his capacity as leader of the regiment, the political commissar must be irreproachable in his private life.⁶⁵

This opening paragraph virtually repeats what had previously been thought of as being the general position of the military commissar, although in these instructions, there does seem to be a greater emphasis on the commissar setting an example to the men, both on and off the field, so to speak.

The next part of the instructions then went on to list the various responsibilities of the regimental commissars:

1. Supervising the command staff of the regiment...the commissar must pay particular attention to watching the command staff for signs of possible treachery...
3. The regimental political commissar must tirelessly develop in the soldiers an understanding of military duty and loyalty to Soviet power. The commissar must especially firmly fight against desertion, drunkenness, attacks on the population.⁶⁶

These two points encompass the basic functions of the commissar in any unit, arguably. It was still the case that the first function of the commissar, as perceived by a number of army political departments, was watching over the activities of the military specialists. There was still a fair amount of distrust between the military specialists and the ordinary rank and file soldier, after all. The commissars, in watching over the activities of the military specialists ensured or, at least, gave greater confidence to the soldiers who simply did not trust the former Tsarist officers. However, the third point listed in these instructions was also necessary, as will be detailed later. The commissars had to ensure that strict observance of the military and civilian law was properly carried out and, certainly, a number of the Red Army units did carry out a number of illegal activities whilst serving in the Red Army.

The instructions then went on to list the structures

that the commissar was supposed to use, in the performance of his duties:

4. In his capacity as political leader of the regiment, the commissar must work in the closest contact with the collective of Communists in the regiment, not only in organising the collective and taking...part in its work, but also in drawing the collective to his own commissarial work...in all his activities in the regiment, the commissar must remember that he is the official representative of the political department.

5. Completely unacceptable is for the regimental commissar [to conduct-SM] agitation...against the command personnel and staff of the army. On the contrary, the commissar must struggle against such agitation...the commissar must inculcate in the soldiers faith in the vigilance of the army political commissars towards the command personnel.

6. The commissar must send daily to the political department a political summary, but more detailed reports about his work on the mood of the regiment [must be sent-SM] no less than once a week...in all cases, when the commissar is in difficulty on how to decide a problem, he can refer to the political department.⁶⁷

This part of the instructions would seem to be a clear indication of an element of control creeping over the work of the military commissars, emanating from the political department itself. As will be detailed further on in this chapter, the political departments, on the whole, were to play a much greater role in the politicising of the Red Army than the military commissars. They were much more

the organs of the Party in the Red Army than the military commissars were.

Hence, Gusev's instructions virtually making the commissars accountable to the political departments was a trend which did not occur in all the Red Army units at

this time but, as the situation changed and time wore on, became a standard in the future development of the Red Army's political apparatus. Although the political apparatus on the Southern Front developed somewhat later than the apparatus on the Eastern Front, it too was not slow in seeing the advantages in capitalising on expanding the possibilities of the functions of the military commissars.

Following the creation of the Southern Front on 11th September 1918,⁶⁸ regulations on the formation of the political department of the Military soviet(Voronezh raion, Southern sector of the 'screens')were published on 30th September 1918.⁶⁹ These regulations paint a somewhat different picture of the role of the military commissar than Gusev's instructions for the Eastern Front. According to the instructions published on the Southern Front, the commissar was to play the dominant role:

- 1)the Political department of the Military soviet is organised by the military commissar of the soviet...
- 2)at the disposal of the political department are all political-educational organisations, cultural-educational commissions, clubs, libraries, schools, agitators, lecturers and, in general, all Party comrades working in institutions and military units, subordinate to the Military soviet of the Voronezh raion.⁷⁰

Thus, in these instructions, it would appear that the military commissar had the upper hand, so to speak. It was he who created the political department and controlled everything subordinated to it. In this particular

instance, the military commissar had ceased to be merely "the eyes and ears" of Soviet power; in effect, he had the same amount of power and influence as was to be enjoyed by the chiefs of the army and front political departments. This is an important point, as it serves to demonstrate how, without any help from the central military or political apparatus, the functions of the military commissars had begun to move away from what had been earlier fixed by central decree, or order, and respond to the exact needs of the military and political situation, as it was perceived at the front.

On the whole, the commissars, at this time, enjoyed almost a unique position in the Red Army—for a variety of reasons, they enjoyed the trust of the command staff, the soldiers and the Party. Overall, the commissars had still to watch over the command staff and ensure the proper level of discipline in the units but, as evident from these instructions, by the autumn of 1918, as a direct result of the situation at the front, the commissar began to assume an ever more important role in the political life of the unit.

(v) The response of the centre to the changing role of the military commissars (September-December 1918)

The situation at the centre was also beginning to show some signs of change, however slight. On 25th September 1918, the People's Commissariat of Military Affairs ordered the creation of courses for military commissars, under the control of VBVK.⁷¹ The order consisted of six points, not all of them relevant to this dissertation, so only those of most relevance to this particular section will be detailed here. The first point simply stated that VBVK was in control of the courses and was in charge of the course plans and studies; the second point then went on to state that entry to the courses was carried out on the basis of Party or soviet recommendation; the next point then stated that the courses were to consist of two cycles of lectures, one military and the other political; the rest of the points in the order then went on to examine the rates of pay for the students attending the course, as well as the fees for the lecturers who taught the students.⁷² According to one source, these courses began operating on 10th October 1918 and more than 200 students enrolled.⁷³ By the middle of December 1918, of this complement of 200, some 186 graduated and were sent to various units at the front.⁷⁴ A new intake of students

was announced in November 1918 and they began to enrol in December 1918 (however, more on that in a separate section).

Following the reorganisational shuffle of the central military and political apparatus in the autumn of 1918 (see previous section), VBVK now found itself in a position to attempt to exert a much greater influence on the work of the military commissars. Although the meeting will be discussed in greater detail below, in December 1918, an important meeting took place between the chiefs of the political departments of all the armies on the Southern Front and representatives of VBVK.⁷⁵

The instructions worked out at the meeting not only discussed the role of the political department or the Party cells, but also the role of the military commissars. The part of the instructions which discussed the role of the military commissars will be analysed here.

According to the instructions, one of the main areas for discussion was "unifying the activity of the commissars in the armies, directing their work and controlling them."⁷⁶ Given official sanction by VBVK, it should be remembered, the instructions altered the balance of power in the relationship between the political departments and the military commissars back in favour of the political departments:

1. Above all, to establish and maintain a close link with all the commissars subordinated to the department.
3. Systematically inform the commissars about the most important facts of the political struggle and about the work of the political department.
4. Direct the Party-organisational activity of the commissar, ie direct and control his activity in organising regimental Party cells.
5. Pay special attention to his personal conduct in a military situation.
6. Carefully observe the inter-relationship between the commissar and the commander and continually check attempts to interfere in the operational sphere.⁷⁷

This apparent reversal in the relationship between the political department and the military commissar was probably brought about by the reality of the work being undertaken at the front, at that time. Whilst earlier on, it had been the case that initially, at least, political departments had been controlled by the military commissars, as the political departments grew bigger and more complex, the political departments became the dominant political organ in the Red Army. Hence, as contained in these new instructions, the political department was instructed to watch over the work of the military commissars, including their relationship with the military specialists. However, there could still be no denying the importance of the role of the military commissar, even at this stage in the history of the Red Army. Witness the following extract from a report sent to the Party's Secretariat in December 1918, written by the then Chief of Eastern Front's Political department, I.N.Smirnov:

in every regiment there is a political commissar who, apart from watching the command staff, groups around himself all the Communists of the regiment, he is the organiser, the agitator, he informs the political department about the mood of the soldiers and peasants in the neighbouring villages...the commissar plays an exceptionally important role in the army. There have been cases, for example in the Bryansk regiment, when the commissar, the only Communist in the regiment, by his influence on the soldiers, completely changes the face of the regiment.⁷⁸

Further on in his report, Smirnov was to state what was almost to become a truism throughout the experience of the Civil War:

the Bolshevik in the army is the commissar, and the more there are of them, then the more sure is the army.⁷⁹

Thus, throughout the length of 1918, the military commissars had undergone a number of changes in the perception of their relationship to the other political organs of the Red Army, most prominently in their relationship to the political departments. The combined experience of all the armies seemed to favour what was given official sanction in December 1918, by VBVK, that political departments should direct the activity of the commissars, as they controlled the activity of the Party cells. As shown by Smirnov's report, this would seem to have been the case, in practise anyway. The basic functions of the commissars at the front, in some respects, did not change significantly throughout the length of 1918-they still had to watch over the command

staff and the soldiers; they still had to ensure discipline in the units and they still had to set an example to the men, both on and off duty. To the extent that little emphasis seems to have been paid extending their role in the conduct of political or cultural-educational work can only be explained by the presence of the political departments, which were to play a very important role in the conduct of political and cultural-educational work amongst the men in the units, as will be shown later. As the political departments became more and more important and discipline became less of a problem in the Red Army units, then the role of the military commissar, throughout the remainder of the Civil War, although still important, began to assume a less than crucial air about it.

As will be detailed in the next chapter, whilst there is a fairly large body of material on the role and function of the commissars in the Red Army in 1918, the material becomes considerably less abundant when analysing events of 1919. This is more than likely a sign of the diminishing total importance of the commissars to the Red Army's victories in the remaining half of the Civil War. Before leaving this analysis of the role of the military commissars in the Red Army and their relationship to VBVK, a number of sub-sections will appear which will shed more light on the total number of military commissars in the

Soviet Republic, at this time, as well as analyse further the centralised courses on offer for the training of the commissars and, finally, examine the day-to-day activity of the commissars in the Red Army, as revealed by the admittedly scant memoir material.

(vi) Numbers

In attempting to arrive at some overall figure for the number of commissars in the Soviet Republic, at this time, only one Soviet historian has carried out any form of extensive archival research to produce any such figure. V.G.Kolychev, in a book published in 1979, quoting an archival source, stated the following:

in December 1918, registered with the All-Russian Bureau of Military Commissars were 6,389 commissars.⁸⁰

To date, this total figure for the number of commissars in the Republic by the end of 1918 has been impossible to check. The best piece of evidence which lends support to this figure and which can be checked independently is to be found in a collection of documents of Lenin's writings on the military question. In such a collection, one finds the following document simply

entitled, "notes on the structure of the All-Russian Bureau of Military Commissars."⁸¹ These notes were the outcome of information being sent by Yurenev to Lenin, in response to an earlier request of Lenin's for information about the general activity of VBVK.⁸² Although the notes did describe the general organisational structure of VBVK, they also made reference to an approximate figure for the overall total of commissars in the Republic. According to the notes, the number of commissars in the republic was "more than 6,000(up to 7,000)."⁸³

Thus, although the figures are not exact, they would seem to lend general support to Kolychev's previous figure, gleaned from the archives. However, even if the figure is accurate, it should not be forgotten that it is a general total and does not represent the total number of commissars working in the Red Army, at the front, for instance. Unfortunately, it is also not possible to say from what social class the majority of the commissars came from, during this time. Whilst there is information available for 1919/1920, there is no such information available for 1918.

(vii) Courses

As stated earlier, on 25th September 1918, the People's Commissariat of Military Affairs ordered the creation of a series of courses for the centralised training of the commissars. As described earlier, the courses were to consist of two cycles of lectures-one military and the other political.⁸⁴ According to one Soviet historian's estimation of these courses, the basic tasks of the courses were:

to impart to the Comrade Communists, working in the military field, and those earmarked by the Party for such work, knowledge for this speciality and also to give them the possibility to revitalise and strengthen their own knowledge in the area of political theory.⁸⁵

This would seem to suggest that, initially anyway, the emphasis was equally on the military and political cycles of lectures-a move which, given the circumstances of the time, would have made a lot of sense. After all, as shown above, the commissars were important in the military arena and, therefore, it was important that the commissars, sent out by the central authorities were well-educated specifically in the military art. According to Kolychev's article, the courses would appear to have been oversubscribed. On the opening day of the courses, 223 people turned up⁸⁶, but only 186 actually completed the courses

in December 1918.⁸⁷ Apparently, the students studied a fairly broad range of subjects, including

the history of the working-class movement, the history of the Russian Communist Party, political economy, dialectical and historical materialism and other social-political subjects. Much prominence was also given to studying the military art, tactics and strategy, topography,⁸⁸ military geography, administration, military psychology.

Kolychev even identified the men who were in charge of these VBVK courses: the chief of the courses was one I.A.Aksenov, his assistant was K.A.Bolshakov- unfortunately, it has not been possible to find any biographical details on either of these men.⁸⁹ Other than that, very little information is available on the courses, as a whole but, looking through a number of the newspapers of the period, it is possible to expand on what has just been written and provide more detail on the courses and the students themselves.

In October 1918, an article appeared in the military newspaper of the Petrograd Soviet, "Vooruzheniy Narod", on VBVK's courses and, to say quite frankly, the article was critical of a number of the features of the courses. The author of the article-Antyukhin-started off his article in a rather complimentary fashion, stressing the good course content and the quality of the lecturers:

since the opening of the courses, more than two weeks have already passed. During this time, the trainees have

already heard a number of lecturers...on various themes: strategy, tactics, topography, administration, artillery, fortifications and psychology of the troops...the lecturers chosen by the All-Russian Bureau of Military Commissars are good. [They are-SM] people with great military training and practical experience. By their own statements, they have all taken part in the Japanese or imperialist war and, doubtless, this is true. They read their lectures simply and clearly, trying as much as possible to give their knowledge to the students.⁹⁰

No mention here of any socio-political subjects on offer to the military commissars; of course, it could have been the case that the socio-political subjects mentioned earlier were added later to the course content. What is also interesting here is that we have a somewhat ironic situation of military specialists-former combatants of the 1905 Russo-Japanese War and the First World War-teaching military commissars their military duty. A sign of the seriousness that VBVK attached to the proper training of the military commissars. As regards the political cycle of lectures, Kolychev stated that lecturers from the Moscow oblast Party committee were used.⁹¹

Antyukhin then went on to state that the lecturers-the military lecturers that is-spent a lot of time analysing the "inadequacies" of the Russian Army during the First World War, in order that the trainees, after completing the course "would take the most active part in building the army, according to the new...plan of the People's Commissariat of Military Affairs."⁹² This was obviously a case of trying to learn from the mistakes of the past and

encourage the future commissars to realise the heavy burden of responsibility that weighed on their shoulders.

However, Antyukhin also went on to discuss the problems associated with the course including the raw material of the courses, so to speak, the students themselves:

unfortunately, not all the students approach their studies seriously. Part irregularly attend, some, if the topic is interesting, listen...but, if the topic is boring, leave the lessons altogether. The remaining 150-200 students listen but, unfortunately, also not particularly attentively, which is bad for comrades who seriously wish to study.⁹³

The problems were also not restricted to the students either-the article also went on to note the following problems:

the administration of the courses, because it was obvious that not all the students were attending the lessons, compelled the introduction of a watch, both in the auditorium and in the hostel, to make a daily note of those students who attend the lessons...and those who do not. [When-SM]this measure was introduced, the number of students [attending-SM]increased immediately, but still not all attend.⁹⁴

There was even a problem with feeding the students, as detailed in the following extract:

the most burning problem of the day...the problem of provisions...the All-Russian Bureau of Military Commissars has not bothered about normalising this problem...one must say that, relying only on the one bad meal a day which the students receive, it would not be enough to survive on...the All-Russian Bureau of Military Commissars must solve this problem quickly, up until now, it has only

promised to normalise the situation and more than two weeks have already passed.⁹⁵

In concluding his article, Antyukhin returns, once more, to examining the quality of the students attending the course:

one can say with certainty that...a large number of the students do not fulfil the requirements[of the courses-SM]. Some are very young and unrestrained, even between themselves they cannot maintain order...Others approach their studies with indifference and even often do not attend the lectures...there are still people arriving who are neither serious nor Party members, thanks to poor vetting in the enrolment to the courses. This can be explained by casualness on the part of the students.⁹⁶

Thus, the overall picture painted by the initial experience of Antyukhin would seem to be a fairly gloomy one, as regards the administration of the courses and the students themselves. The fact that a number of the students seemed to display a fairly bad attitude towards the lectures on offer would imply that they would become bad commissars in the units, unless they were able to change their attitude quickly. Even ensuring that the students had a decent meal inside them was a problem for VBVK to solve; it has to be said that, given the poor organisation involved with the courses, VBVK does not come out of the criticism too well.

Once the students completed their course, they were then appointed by VBVK's administration department to various brigades, central military institutions and the

like.⁹⁷ There was a further uptake of students turned up on enrolment day(the courses had been restructured, hence the smaller intake)but, despite everything, the courses were still beset by problems.⁹⁸ The situation at the front did not help the situation much either, as Kolychev noted in his article on the subject:

the courses of military commissars experienced great difficulties in their work. It was difficult to take many Party workers from their military work on the front...a great insufficiency of teachers, especially on political subjects was felt. All this did not permit a planned programme of work for the courses. After two graduations, which produced a little more than 300 political commissars, in connection with the difficult situation on the fronts, on 8th March 1919, the courses were closed.⁹⁹

Whilst it would be easy to lay all the blame at VBVK's door, so to speak and, once again, fault it for its lack of ability to supply the Red Army with the necessary quality and quantity of commissars, it has to be remembered that VBVK was breaking a lot of new ground and, in many ways, did lay the foundation for the more successful work of the organ that was to replace it-PUR. It should also be remembered that VBVK also had the power of appointment of military commissars-according to a number of sources. This, in itself, would help to improve its total figure for the number of commissars trained and/or/appointed to the Red Army by VBVK: for instance, according to one account, between July-October 1918, VBVK

sent out 501 commissars to the Red Army units¹⁰⁰;
according to another source, in the last three months of
1918, VBVK sent out a further 450 commissars to the Red
Army, of whom almost half went straight into the field
units.¹⁰¹ These figures represent all the known
commissars trained and/or/appointed by VBVK in 1918. It
could be that there were other appointments, which have
gone unrecorded, for some reason. It should not be
forgotten, though, that not all of these commissars would
be sent to serve in the field units of the Red Army and,
if one takes into account that, by the end of 1918, there
were some 6,500 military commissars in the whole of the
Republic, then it does not take too much to realise how so
few commissars owed their training or appointment to VBVK.

(viii) Daily activity of the military commissars (1918-
1919)

Before leaving this general analysis of the role of
the military commissars in the Red Army and their
relationship to VBVK in 1918, it would probably help the
reader to arrive at a much clearer and informed picture of
the importance of the military commissars, if something
was said about their daily activity in the Red Army. As

stated earlier, however, very few commissars have actually sat down and put pen to paper and described their experience of the Civil War. Thus, what follows below is based on a very small collection of memoir material and can only give a partial insight in to the work of the commissars in the Red Army. In collating material for this particular section, only three works have been found which actually detail the work of the commissars on anything like a daily basis: these works are N.I.Kiryukhin's "Iz dnevnika voennogo komissara. Grazhdanskaya voina, 1918-1919."(M.1928); A.P.Kuchkin's "V boyakh i pokhodakh ot Volgi do Yeniseya:zapiski voennogo komissara."(M.1969) and, finally, V.I.Berlov's "V plameni, v prokhovym dymi...Zapiski politkomissara."(Stavropol, 1973).

The earliest of these works is, by far and away, the most detailed-it is a comprehensive diary of events, experienced by a commissar of 214th Simbirsk regiment in 1918-1919. As a regimental commissar, Kiryukhin was very much at the forefront as regards the conduct of political and cultural-educational work in the units, as well as having to deal with instances of desertion, drunkenness, indiscipline, etc, so his account of life in the unit contains a lot of information which one would not expect to find in more official and sanitised histories of the Civil War. It should also be noted that there is no

mention of VBVK, whatsoever, in any of the works listed-
surely, a further indictment of VBVK's lack of contact
with the commissars at the front.

Kiryukhin's account begins with a description of how
he became commissar to the regiment:

I was still in Moscow and wanted to register in the Party
cell of the 3rd ~~Moscow~~ *Moscow Reserve* regiment, but we were so
quickly sent out to the front that they told me to
register in that unit which I found myself in. I arrived
at the front and from there went into battle...I was
preparing to leave when Panov[regimental commander-
SM]asked what I thought about being used in a military-
political capacity. I expressed doubt about this...but on
16th October[1918-SM]at a political meeting, I was
appointed deputy military-political commissar to the 1st
Simbirsk regiment.¹⁰²

For his part, Berlov-a commissar to the First Cavalry
Army-recounts a similar experience:

in September 1918, an army congress was held in the
village of Sotnikov. The organisation of political work
was discussed and I was elected commissar.¹⁰³

Interestingly enough, as Berlov himself points out in his
book, in the discussion of political work amongst the
troops, the views of the command staff were taken into
account, as well as the views of the other commissars:

it was necessary to strengthen the political education of
the soldiers. This we well understood. But how were we
going to do it? There were various suggestions. The
majority of the commanders inclined to the view that every
regiment should have its own commissar. But where were we
going to get them from? We decided to organise three-
month courses. The regiments would each send 40 of their
best trained workers. They would then be able to enrich
their knowledge and familiarise themselves with the forms
and methods of political work amongst the troops.¹⁰⁴

There was no suggestion that the relevant political organ should turn to VBVK for help. Needless to say, this relatively quick transition to the establishment of courses for the training of military commissars was not reflected in all the other units. For instance, in Kiryukhin's regiment, the build-up to political work was gradual: in Kiryukhin's regiment, he himself set about creating a regimental Party cell followed by forming, in all the other units, cells of sympathisers and opening a regimental library.¹⁰⁵ This took place within two weeks of his appointment!¹⁰⁶ One interesting difference between the initial establishment of political work in the units was that whereas in Berlov's unit, the views of the command staff were brought into the discussion on political work in the unit; in Kiryukhin's unit, the command staff formed the majority of the regimental CP membership.¹⁰⁷

In all the accounts, there is a somewhat less than rosy picture painted of the Red Army—for instance, in just a few pages of Kiryukhin's diary, we find him leaving to deal with the following problems: soldiers illegally requisitioning produce from a local peasant cooperative¹⁰⁸; too many soldiers imbibing of the local samogon and stealing whilst under the influence¹⁰⁹; attacking local peasants whilst stealing¹¹⁰, etc. In fact, as far as Kiryukhin was concerned, all of this

helped to strengthen his resolve to carry out more political and cultural-educational work amongst the troops:

everything possible must be done to help the cultural-educational circle, so that it can stand on its own feet and can give the soldier and the commander an intellectual diversion and distract them from playing cards and drunkenness, which are still fairly widespread in the regiment.¹¹¹

In a separate extract, Kuchkin equated drunkenness with desertion and stated what surely must have been a unpleasant truism for the commissars at the time:

drunk Red Army soldiers...were more inclined to desert.¹¹²

In his diary, Kiryukhin constantly returns to the problem of the men drinking too much, a problem seemingly exacerbated both by the geographical position of the units and, of course, the social origins of the men:

the Chuvash villages are strongly involved in the illegal distillation of samogon and make drunkards of our Red Army soldiers. In one village...we had to impose a fine of 10,000 rubles but, in spite of warnings made by me at meetings, the peasants continued to distil and sell samogon.¹¹³

Kuchkin also discovered that not all the illegal samogon-production was inspired by the simple desire to make money:

a number of White agents, working in the villages, helped the peasants to distil samogon and sell it to the nearby Red Army units. After interrogation, the White agents revealed the thinking behind their involvement in the distillation and selling of samogon: drunk Red Army soldiers would be easier to murder and/or more inclined to desert.¹¹⁴

Needless to say, when desertion did become a problem, 5th Army took the necessary steps:

when desertion became serious, it was decided to execute every 26th man in the brigade.¹¹⁵

Kiryukhin also reveals the sensitivity of the commissars to the national and religious make-up of the units(a problem that we will have recourse to return to in the next chapter). When a number of Tatar soldiers request that they be allowed to bury their dead according to Muslim ritual, Kiryukhin consented to their request without much hesitation. After all, there was no sense in stirring up any necessary trouble amongst a significant minority of the soldiers.¹¹⁶

As regards the overall importance of political work amongst the men, Kiryukhin noted one example where, even though it only involved a minor case of petty theft, the increased political consciousness of the men allowed the authorities to apprehend the villains quickly and without much fuss:

there have been cases of petty theft, unwarranted searches and even robbery, but political work carried out amongst

the men has not been in vain. The soldiers themselves have helped us uncover the cases...of petty theft and punish the guilty people. For example today[25th January 1919-SM]the soldiers of the 1st battalion brought to me their own comrade, who had stolen...a whole bundle of linen, women's hankies, etc...and requested that he be punished.¹¹⁷

Kiryukhin even noted a couple of instances when political work was literally carried out under the fire of the enemy or during a lull in the fighting¹¹⁸-given the conditions at the front, this must have been a not altogether uncommon experience for a number of military commissars. Thus, in general, if the activity of the military commissars, described here, was representative of what really happened in the Red Army, as a whole, then one has to argue that the military commissars must have played a vital role not only in the construction of the Red Army, but also in the maintenance of the necessary level of combat efficiency, through the programmes of political and cultural-educational activity and, of course, through maintaining the level of discipline and order in the unit. As shown in Kiryukhin's account, especially, the list of duties of the military commissar were fairly lengthy and, in effect, had grown throughout 1918-by the end of 1918, they were much more than simply watch-dogs of the revolution in the army.

Despite the almost non-existent relationship with the centre, the commissars would appear to have acquit

themselves well of both their duties and functions. If there was not too much actually written down on the functions of the commissars, that would appear not to have prevented them, in any way, from carrying out their duties. As will be shown in the next chapter, the duties and functions of the military commissars were not to remain unchanged in the year ahead and, although their relationship with the central political apparatus for the Red Army was never ever really properly defined, nevertheless, there could be little denying their overall importance to the military functioning of the Red Army during the Civil War.

The next section for examination will involve an analysis of the role of the Party cells in the functioning of the Red Army during 1918 and their relationship with VBVK at the time: a relationship that, in many respects, was to be no less complicated than the one that had existed between the military commissars and VBVK.

NOTES(1):-

1. "Sovetskaya voennaya entsiklopediya." vol.2, M.1976, p.268.

2. R. Browder and A. Kerensky, "The Russian Provisional Government. 1917." Vol.2, Stanford, California, 1961, p.865.

3. S. S. Khromov, "Grazhdanskaya voina i voennaya interventsia v SSSR. Entsiklopediya." M.1983, pp.106-7.

4. A. Geronimus et al. "Osnovnye printsipy partiino-politicheskoi raboty v RKKA v mirnoe i voennoe vremya." Leningrad, 1930, p.29.

5. A. Bubnov et al. "Grazhdanskaya voina, 1918-1921." Vol.2, M.1928, p.56.

6. L. Trotsky, "Kak vooruzhalas revoliutsiya." Vol.1, M.1923, p.406.

7. "Izvestiya Sovetov rabochikh, soldatskikh i krestyanskikh deputatov gor. Moskvy i Moskovskoi oblasti." 1.6.1918.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid., 8.6.1918.

12. Ibid.

13. Yu. P. Petrov, "KPSS-rukovoditel i vospitatel Krasnoi Armii (1918-1920 gg.)". M.1961, p.156.

14. "Krasnaya Armiya", (the military organ of the Petrograd Worker's commune), 11.6.1918.

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid.

NOTES(2):-

18. For biographical details on both these men, consult the relevant biographical appendix at the end of this dissertation.

19. "Krasnaya Armiya", 11.6.1918.

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid.

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid.

26. For biographical details, see the biographical appendix at the end of this dissertation.

27. "Krasnaya Armiya", 11.6.1918.

28. Ibid.

29. "Izvestiya Sovetov...", 9.6.1918.

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid.

33. Ibid.

34. "Krasnaya Armiya", 14.6.1918.

35. Ibid.

36. Ibid.

37. "Izvestiya Sovetov...", 12.6.1918.

38. Ibid.

39. Ibid.

40. "Krasnaya Armiya", 14.6.1918.

NOTES(3):-

41.N.Savko, "Ocherki po istorii organizatsii v Krasnoi Armii. 1918-1923." Moscow-Leningrad, 1928, p.29.

42."Partiino-politicheskaya rabota v Krasnoi Armii(aprel 1918-fevral 1919). Dokumenty." Vol.1, M.1961, pp.79-84.

43.Ibid., pp.79-84.

44.Ibid., pp.79-81.

45.Ibid., p.79.

46.Ibid., pp.79-80.

47.Ibid., pp.80-81.

48.Ibid., pp.81-82.

49.V.G.Kolychev, "Partiino-politicheskaya rabota v Krasnoi Armii v gody grazhdanskoi voyny. 1918-1920." M.1979, p.108.

50.Khromov, ibid., p.116.

51.Kolychev, ibid., p.108.

52."Partiino-politicheskaya rabota...", vol.1, M.1979, p.181.

53.Ibid.

54."Izvestiya Narodnogo Komissariata po Voennym Delam." 18.7.1918.,

55.Ibid.

56."Partiino-politicheskaya rabota...", vol.1, M.1961, p.182.

57.Ibid.

58.Ibid., pp.235-7.

59.Ibid., pp.235-6.

60.Ibid., p.183.

NOTES(4):-

61. Partiino-politicheskaya rabota...", vol.1, p.182.
62. Savko, "Ocherki po istorii...", p.40.
63. "Partiino-politicheskaya rabota...", vol.1, M.1961, pp.186-7
64. Ibid., p.348.
65. Ibid., p.186.
66. Ibid., p.187.
67. Ibid.
68. Khromov, ibid., p.677.
69. "Partiino-politicheskaya rabota...", vol.1, M.1961, pp.238-40.
70. Ibid., p.238.
71. "Izvestiya Narodnogo...", 27.9.1918.
72. Ibid.
73. "Partiino-politicheskaya rabota...", vol.1, M.1961, pp.343-4.
74. A.M.Iovlev, "Deyatelnost KPSS po podgotovke voennykh kadrov." M.1976, p.64.
75. "Perepiska Sekretariata TsK RKP(B) s mestnymi partiynymi organizatsiyami. Noyabr-dekabr 1918 g." Vol.5, M.1970, p.359.
76. "Partiino-politicheskaya rabota...", vol.1, M.1961, p.244.
77. Ibid., pp.244-5.
78. "Perepiska Sekretariata...", vol.5, M.1970, p.355.
79. Ibid., p.357.
80. Kolychhev, ibid., p.99.
81. V.I.Lenin, "Voennaya perepiska." M.1987, p.108.

NOTES(5):-

- 82.Yu.I.Korablev, "V.I.Lenin i zashchita zavoevaniy Velikogo Oktyabrya." 2nd edition, M.1979, p.381.
- 83.Lenin, ibid., p.108.
- 84.See earlier on in this section.
- 85.V.G.Kolychev, "Podgotovka kadrov Krasnoi Armii v gody grazhdanskoi voiny(1918-1920)." ('Voprosy Istorii KPSS', no.3, M.1979, p.68).
- 86.Kolychev, "Podgotovka kadrov...", M.1979, p.68.
- 87.See earlier on in this section.
- 88.V.G.Kolychev, "Podgotovka kadrov...", M.1979, p.68.
- 89."Vooruzheniy Narod"(organ of the military section of the Petrograd Soviet), 29.10.1918.
- 90.Ibid.
- 91.Kolychev, "Podgotovka kadrov...", M.1979, p.68.
- 92."Vooruzheniy Narod", 29.10.1918.
- 93.Ibid.
- 94.Ibid.
- 95.Ibid.
- 96.Ibid.
- 97.Kolychev, "Podgotovka kadrov...", M.1979, p.69.
- 98.Ibid.
- 99.Ibid.
- 100.N.I.Shatagin, "Organizatsiya i stroitelstvo Sovetskoi Armii v period inostrannoi voennoi interventsii i grazhdanskoi voiny (1918-1920 gg.)". M.1954, p.151.
- 101.Yu.P.Petrov, "Voennye komissary." M.1956, p.18.
- 102.N.I.Kiyukhin, "Iz dnevnika voennogo komissara. Grazhdanskaya voyna. 1918-1919." M.1928, p.8.

NOTES(6):-

103.V.I.Berlov, "V plameni, v prokhovym dymi...Zapiski politkomissara." Stavropol, 1973, p.22.

104.Ibid., p.23.

105.Kiryukhin, ibid., p.19.

106.Ibid.

107.Ibid.

108.Ibid.

109.Ibid., p.23.

110.Ibid., p.28.

111.Ibid., pp.31-2.

112.A.P.Kuchkin, "V boyakh i pokhodakh ot Volgi do Yeniseya: zapiski voennogo komissara." M.1969, p.64.

113.Kiryukhin, ibid., p.28.

114.Kuchkin, ibid., p.59.

115.Ibid.

116.Kiryukhin, ibid., p.72.

117.Ibid., p.56.

118.Ibid., pp.79;118.

CHAPTER TWO(SECTION THREE):

VBVK AND THE ROLE OF THE PARTY CELLS IN THE RED ARMY(APRIL 1918-APRIL 1919).

As mentioned in the previous section, the military commissars were by no means alone in the conduct of political or cultural-educational work in the Red Army in 1918-1919. Both the Party cells and the political departments, as will be detailed below, had a role to play in the conduct of the various political and cultural-educational programmes being carried out in the Red Army, both on a local and a national basis. The degree of coordination between the centre and the organs working at the periphery, as previously shown in the last section on the work of the military commissars, was always a thorny problem for the military-political apparatus in Moscow. This was never more prominent than in relation to the conduct and organisation of the Party cells which, rightly or wrongly, would appear to have been largely impervious to the demands of the centre and carried out their own work in their own way. In short, VBVK had a very difficult time in trying to exert any influence on the

work of the Party cells at the front and, similar to the situation with the military commissars, cannot be judged to have been a particular success in this area. This section, however, will examine the organisation, work and composition of the front-line Party cells and the nature of the relationship with the central military-political apparatus of the period, using material which has rarely been seen outside of a number of Soviet libraries. Alongwith the previous section, this section will further help the reader to better understand the complex picture of political and cultural-educational work in the Red Army, as well as provide a useful back-drop to the section that follows on from this one, analysing the role of the political departments in the Red Army.

When and in exactly what circumstances the first Party cells appeared in the Red Army during the Civil War is, unfortunately, almost impossible to describe at present, due to the distinct lack of primary and secondary source material available on this subject. A virtual throw-away comment by only one Soviet historian gives an indication of the fate of a number of the Party cells in the old Imperial Army, after the October Revolution in 1917:

many Bolshevik Party cells, having appeared in the old army, in connection with its demobilisation, disintegrated.¹

The latter comment may, on the face of it, seem somewhat odd-after all, how was it that Party cells, after the success of the October Revolution fell apart, surely their influence in the armed forces should have increased, not diminished?

The explanation for this apparent paradox is quite simple-unlike the position of the commissars in the armed forces, in the immediate aftermath of the October Revolution, the Party cells were not viewed as being guardians of Soviet power in the army. The Party cells had, after all, spent a large part of 1917 disseminating Bolshevik propaganda in the army units, doing their utmost to destroy the overall morale of the army and render it useless in the event of a Bolshevik attempt to seize power. Given the initial hesitancy in creating a new military force for the defence of the revolutionary regime, the Party cells found themselves as having fulfilled their initial and primary function and were simply not equipped to reverse their previous work and begin to build a new army. Hence, no doubt, a number of them probably did just fall apart. However, once the Bolsheviks did realise the importance of a newly constituted military force, the Bolsheviks increased the powers of the military commissars, mobilised more Communist Party members into the Red Army, especially in August-September 1918, and forced a turn-around in the

fortunes of the Party cells This can be proven if one examines the impact that the Party mobilisations must have had on the strength and size of the Party cells in the military units: between July-October 1918, the Moscow Party organisation sent to the front alone some 2,000 Communist Party members, to serve in the ranks of the Red Army as political workers and military commissars; for its part, the Petrograd Party organisation, around about the same time, also sent a further 800 Party members to fill in similar posts.²

Thus, whenever there was a threat emanating, the Party, amongst other measures adopted, usually carried out a mass mobilisation of the Party rank and file to serve in the units as political workers, military commissars or ordinary unit soldiers. Regardless of their military or political capacity, each one of the Party members was required to join and play an effective role in the work of the Party cell and, on a much more general basis, the political and cultural life of the unit. Thus, with the increase in the numbers of Communists being sent to the military units, the fortunes of the Party cells were reversed and soon they began to play a prominent role in the life of the unit; a role which, in general terms, VBVK found almost impossible to control and/or/ regulate. In looking at the figures on the growth in the number of Party cells in the Red Army, at this time, there is a

slight discrepancy in the figures available.

However, the most reliable figures available come from a collection of documents, published commemorating the tenth anniversary of the creation of the Red Army in 1928.³ According to the anniversary collection of documents, the number of Party cells in the Red Army by October 1918 was 800⁴-this figure increasing to 3,000 by October 1919.⁵ Further, it is even possible to state how many men, on average, were actually members of a Party cell: in October 1918, the average size of the Party cell was 43 men per cell; by October 1919, this figure stood at 40 men per cell.⁶ This would give an approximate total Party representation in the Red Army of 34,400 and 120,000 men, figures which do bear a striking correlation with the actual figures for Communist Party representation in the Red Army at that time-the actual figures being 35,000 and 121,681 respectively for October 1918 and October 1919.⁷ Thus, in terms of numbers alone, the Party cells would appear to have been in a very commanding position, as regards the potential possibility to carry out any concerted programme of political and/or/cultural-educational work that the CP may have saw fit to introduce.

However, there was one major problem, as regards the actual organisation of the Party cells themselves-they lacked uniformity in organisation and, on a wider scale, in definition of purpose and function. Even as regards

the actual control of the Party cells, there was no clearly defined idea of who was supposed to be in charge of them:

leadership of the Party cells either came from the political commissar or the political department or the local Party committee. Not too rare was the case where they simply managed themselves.⁸

Curiously enough, G.Lindov, a political commissar on the Eastern Front in 1918-1919, who recorded his experiences of political work at the front as the Civil War was still raging, could discuss the work and organisational details of the political departments and the military commissars, but when it came to discussing the role of the Party cells, had very little to say on the latter. As far as Lindov was concerned, the tasks of the Party cells in the Red Army units were as follows:

to carry out amongst the soldiers Communist propaganda, develop in them their class and Communist consciousness, inure them to the Party organisation and Party discipline. The Party cells maintain in the units the revolutionary spirit, a spirit of loyalty to Soviet power, revolutionary discipline and a willingness to lay down their lives for the cause of world socialism.⁹

At the same time that Lindov had his work published on the organisation and tasks of political work in the Red Army, another more specialised pamphlet came out, designed specifically to help the units effectively organise their party cells on a more concrete basis. The title of the pamphlet, translated, was "How to organise the company

Party cells(on the basis of a report of comrade Podvoisky)".¹⁰ The pamphlet was published in Kiev but it can be assumed that it was meant to be used in a wider context. The pamphlet details the ideal organisational structure of the Party cells, as well as discussing their primary tasks. According to the pamphlet, the Party cell should have the following organisational set up:

the cell must have the following apparatus:

- 1)registration-mobilisation
- 2)agitation
- 3)technical-economic, administrative.¹¹

The company Party cell was to involve all the Communists and the Communist sympathisers, who themselves were to form a separate group within the Party cell.¹² The political work of the Party cell largely involved a variety of cultural and educational tasks, eg establishing a school, gathering all those who could read and write to read the papers, brochures, establishing contact with the nearby villages, etc.¹³ The pamphlet also went on to analyse the contents of the books for the company cell's library, beginning with the statement that the cell had to be careful to choose-

not abstruse, unintelligible books, but only the most simple:

- 1)to beat or not to beat the Jew[a title more appropriate to the conditions prevailing in the Ukraine at the time perhaps-SM]
- 2)what is the commune?
- 3)when will the war end?
- 4)why the supply situation is so bad.¹⁴

As regards maintaining discipline in the company, in the words of the author of the pamphlet, "the company's eyes and ears are the members of the Party cell"¹⁵ and it was also beholding on the members of the Party cell to help drive out the evils of "cards, vodka and dirt".¹⁶ In conclusion, the pamphlet ended with the following summary statement on the Party cell's intended course of action:

the Party cell must win the soldier over by deeds: in the event of misfortune, promise to write home for him, organise medical help in the rear...all this is preparatory...leading to winning over the masses and the company.¹⁷

It could well have been the case that a number of the Party cells took the latter point to be very much the real work of the Party cells in the Red Army, ie winning over, by deed, the soldiers in the units. It is impossible to gauge the exact effect of Babin's pamphlet on the work of the Party cells, however, therefore it is not possible to say whether, or not, Babin's advice to the company Party cells met with any great response from the units themselves. In examining the actual work of the Party cells in the units, recourse will have to be made to a fairly wide body of material scattered in various collections of documents, published since the end of the Civil War. It is only by examining such evidence that we can attempt to properly estimate the total value of the Party cells to the political and cultural-educational

training of the soldiers at the time. However, it will become apparent that for a properly detailed examination and analysis of the role of the Party cells in the Civil War, much more information will have to be made available to historians in the future.

A number of accounts of the early activity, and chaos, of the work of the Party cells, on a general basis, do show the problems that the Party cells had to face or were themselves actually creating. In a very early account of the history of political work in the First Revolutionary Army, published in 1920, the author, V.Lopukhnov, had this to say about the early inter-relationship of the Party cells with the political department:

very important organisational work of the political department was the organisation of Communist Party cells. In places, they came into being completely spontaneously and very often the political department knew absolutely nothing about their existence. Without any sort of instructions, on the basis of which the cells should have been operating on, there was no registering of Communists. All of this created a huge gulf between the Communist workers in the localities and the political department.¹⁸

Another Soviet historian of the 1920s, A.Geronimus, stated the following about the early organisation and work of the Party cells:

the forms of organisation and work of the Party cells varied enormously. The absence of any directions from the top compelled them to grope for their own paths to activity, to work out their own rights and duties. Apart from internal Party work, the cells directly carried out cultural-educational work, organised clubs, libraries, literacy schools, distributed literature...In a number of

units, the cells even took upon themselves leading administrative functions, right up to electing commissars...taking direct control over the activity of the commanders...and sometimes even interfering in purely operational matters.¹⁹

The latter quote, in itself, is a clear indication of the potential for disaster that the Party cells could wreak, if allowed to continue in such a way. Although it is impossible to say, at present, how widespread the more extreme form of the activity of the Party cells was, ie electing commissars, interfering in the operational decisions of the commanders, taking charge of a number of administrative functions of the units, etc., it is obvious that such discord and lack of unity in overall structure and function could not be allowed to continue unchecked. Thus, on 25th October 1918, the Party's CC took the decisive step of removing one tier of the Party apparatus in the Red Army-the Army-Party committees were abolished.²⁰

Unfortunately, it is almost impossible to detail the work of the Army-Party committees. Other than the facts that they were elected organs, and that their pre-October 1917 career consisted entirely of creating as much trouble as possible for the Provisional Government in the Armed Forces, very little information has been made available on the work of these Army-Party committees. Anyway, according to the relevant CC resolution of the 25th October, entitled "on Party work in the Army":

Party organisations, committees, groups...in the army must not be created. The task of the Party workers consists of creating only cells of Party members, registering Party members, carrying out agitational work, distributing literature, raising the general level of Communist consciousness in the Red Army.²²

It was also the case that the Party decided to transfer the overall leadership of the Party cells in the units to the local Party committees, a move which, in many respects, was a non-starter right from the very beginning, especially given the fluidity of conditions at the front at that time. However, as will be shown below, although the Party's CC may have decreed the abolishment of the Army-Party committees and decided to put the local Party committees at the head of the Red Army's Party cells, practical experience of work at the front did not necessarily fall in line with the CC's thinking on the subject.

In a report to the Eastern Front's political department in November 1918, the then chief of 4th Army's political department, P.M.Voytek, expressed his ideas on the leadership of political work at the front and the position that the Party cells should occupy in this respect:

one organisation should exist, conducting both political and Party work, this is the organ of the political department of the army. It should be flexible and unwieldy...with the regimental Party cells, the political department of the army is linked with the divisional political department. The divisional political department...controls...all the political workers in the division...and the Party cells, closely linked with them.

Through the political commissars and the cells, it[the political department-SM]should be cohesive with the masses. The general living link, control and leadership[of the army-SM]...will be realised by visits along the front by the chief of the army's political department, visits to the army's political department by divisional political chiefs...and, finally, congresses, convened at Army staff-level, of representatives²³ from the Party cells to discuss generally urgent matters.

Thus, judging by the latter statement, the political departments were supposed to be in charge of the work of the Party cells-an arrangement which, in many respects, was a much more logical one than the one worked out by the CC. After all, if nothing else, the political departments were physically much closer to the Party cells and would be in a much stronger position to ascertain their real needs, make use of their manpower strength and, of course, attempt to introduce a much greater degree of control and coordination over their work. A month later, in actual fact, 4 Army's Political department was to make another report on political work in the Army, in which, once again, one of the main topics of the report was a brief organisational history of the Party cells, showing the need for some form of organisational control over the former's activity:

the cells existed before this time[presumably October 1918-SM], but their organisation was of the highest disorder:in the cells were both Communists and sympathisers, calling themselves some sort of a collective and not only sympathisers, who no one had recommended, but also simply those who had defined themselves as such. But they all called themselves a Communist Party cell. Those who considered themselves Communists were those who worked in a rural commune, or those who simply wished to bear

that name.

The cells, composed in such a way, in some units took on all functions: it was the Party court, it was also the comrade's court, it was the economic-control commission, in a word, it suited itself[what it wanted to be-SM]. It accepted members and expelled them, arrested them... Now the matter of registering Party comrades and their organisation is on another track.²⁴

Thus, towards the end of the report, there would appear to be a hint that the Party cells were being brought more under the control of the political department, though whether this was as a direct consequence of the October 1918 CC resolution is impossible to say at present. It could well have been the case that the Army political department was exerting its own authority and power, regardless of the instructions emanating forth from the CC. After all, if the situation, as described, was that bad, then the Army political department could hardly wait on the CC sending out the necessary instructions before rectifying the situation to its advantage.

However, if the situation on the Eastern Front was showing some signs of improvement, then an examination of the situation on the Southern Front, at that time, would appear to show that although there were a number of hopeful signs, concerning the positive impact of the Party cells on the political consciousness of the units, the Party cells were still posing a number of problems for the political departments to solve.

In a report of the Southern Front's Political

department, published in December 1918, the latter reported that in the 10th Army:

from the reports, the position of the army at the front was ascertained: the mood of the units is determined, the influence of the political commissar-Communists is significant, the cells are introducing a new spirit, political consciousness is on the increase, the influence of the Party is growing.²⁵

The above report also mentioned the number of Party cells in the three main armies on the Southern Front at the time:

overall, in the 8th, 9th and 10th Armies on the Southern Front, according to the latest available figures, there are 122 Communist Party cells, 38 groups of sympathisers, 1,717 Communists and 1,200 sympathisers.²⁶

The report then went on to examine the activity of a number of the Party cells, throwing some light on the good and bad activity of the front-line Party cells:

in every unit [reference to the 10th Rifle Regiment, 8th Army-SM] of the regiment, there are Communists and, sometimes, even weak Party cells, in which there is no registration [of Party members-SM], no separate work under the leadership of the Party centre. The Moscow Communists [reference to the mobilisation of Party members for the Southern Front held between October-November 1918. The Moscow Party organisation sent 1,000 Party members alone-SM] have begun to create Party organs under the leadership of the political department. On the 17th November, a Party cell was created which numbered 16 men. The weakness of the Party organisation is explained by the pressure of the Left SRs.²⁷

The above quote is interesting, not least because it demonstrates that the Bolsheviks did encounter problems in the initial creation of Party cells in the units,

requiring in this particular instance, an influx of Party members from Moscow to get the situation back on an even keel, but also because it is a unique mention of the pressure, not merely the existence, of Left SR Party members on the Bolshevik Party's political apparatus in the Red Army. Their strength in this particular unit must have been fairly prominent in order for them to have rated a mention in the Southern Front's political departmental report. The question that now has to be asked, even if no answer can be presently found, is how strong was the influence of the Left SRs in the Red Army at the time? Certainly, it would be very interesting to gauge the effect of the Left SRs in the conduct of the Red Army's political apparatus-after all, as previously noted in the last section, there were a number of Left SR commissars working in the units of the Red army in 1918. Now, in the latest example, we have Left SR pressure preventing the formation of a strong regimental Party cell.

The report also made mention of another regimental Party cell's activity and again the picture painted was not too bright:

the Orlovsky Iron regiment[8th Army-SM]. There exist comrade courts, a Communist Party cell, numbering 18 members and 150 sympathisers. The Party cell warned against mob law...meetings do not take place-there is no time to carry out any organisational work.²⁸

Thus, again, the Party cell would not appear to have

been exerting any particularly positive influence on the ordinary rank and file to any significant extent. In summarising political and cultural-educational work in 9th Army, the report concluded that:

for the creation of Party collectives in the Red Army, too little is being done: there are no instructions for the organisation of Communist Party cells. Party-organisational work bears a fortuitous nature. In the created Party cells the work, to this day, is not united... In the political department, there is no registration of Party cells or Communists. There is no cadre of travelling Party agitators, there are no lecturers.²⁹

Overall, then, the work of the Party cells would still seem to have been a cause for concern both on the Eastern and Southern Fronts and, judging by at least one other report, sent to the Southern Front's Political department at the end of 1918, the situation did not look to have improved. The relevant report was prepared by the chief of 8th Army's political department and focused on the activity of the the latter between November-December 1918. The chief of 8th Army's political department, V. Malakhovsky began the relevant section of his report with the following set of introductory remarks:

our main attention and efforts were directed on Party work. In this respect, there was a lot of work to do. There was not a single Party cell. In units, there were lone Communists... Party discipline, of course, was lacking, as was Party work. What was necessary was to unite all the scattered Communists... There was a proposal to create a firm Party organisation with elected centres and headed by a Party committee [exactly forbidden by the CC resolution of 25th October 1918-SM]. But, very quickly, even before putting this into effect, in

practise we became convinced that such a form of organisation was unsuitable and harmful. And at the Kozlov meeting, I was already ...a firm supporter of the view authorising political departments to become the centres for the Party cells.³⁰

The fact that it was still undecided as to who was in charge of the Party cells at the front speaks volumes for the lack of coordination and poor organisation then existent in the Red Army's political apparatus of the period. The CC resolution, as detailed earlier, of October 1918 had placed the overall leadership of the Party cells in the hands of the local Party committees- from the word, "go", this had not been a particularly bright move, as the situation at the front demanded that control of the Party cells at the front be handed to another organisation actually also serving at the front- only then could there be an opportunity for the Party cells to be properly disciplined and coordinated. Thus, Malakhovsky's authorisation that the Party cells be put under the control of the political departments has to be viewed as a step in the right direction, in fact as he himself later pointed out in his report, it was a move which the Party cells themselves recognised as being the right option:

the bottom[the Party cells-SM]pushed us to have a formal Party centre:constantly, they came to us with requests to approve the organisation of the cell, approve new members, accept members-hip dues, etc. And gradually...the cells grew in numbers and in composition, united around the political department...I will quote a few figures...by 28th November, there were 8 cells, by the 1st December-23,

by the 15th December-41, by 1st January 1919-88 cells with a total number of 1,833 members and 2,621 sympathisers.³¹

The latter extract would seem to provide some strong evidence as to explaining the rise in the overall total number of Party cells in the Red Army between October 1918-October 1919. Obviously, with the overall increase in the number of Party members being sent to the Red Army, more cells would have to be created in order that they were used more effectively than had been the case in the early 1918 period of the history of the Red Army's political apparatus. It certainly made sense, both to the Bolsheviks operating in the political departments and, no doubt, those working in Moscow, that the recognised Party organ in the Red Army-namely, the political department-controlled the Party cells and coordinated their activity. Certainly, Malakhovsky's report would seem to indicate that this increased centralising trend emanated not directly from Moscow, but was a direct reaction to the situation at the front. Given that the Party centre in the Red Army was the political department, once the latter had been formally recognised, the Party cells grew both in size and number. This should not be taken to mean that, from the end of 1918 onwards, all the problems previously associated with the Party cells vanished, but it was the case that as the increased trend towards centralisation of the political apparatus took place, the Party cells did

pose less of a problem for the political departments. Malakhovsky was able to close his report with a degree of optimism for the future conduct of the Red Army's Party cells:

thus, in all the units now we have cells, perhaps, sometimes, they are too small, in composition weak, but their existence, even in a comparatively short time, has left its mark in the life of the army. In raising the discipline and military capability of the units, the cells have, without any doubt, played their part.³²

Due to the lack of available primary source materials, it is difficult to evaluate the experience of political work on the Northern and Western Fronts. In a sense, both fronts, which were formulated a good deal later than either of the Eastern or Southern Fronts, would have been expected to have missed the initial teething problems, so to speak, which the Eastern and Southern Fronts had *gone* through. The Northern Front had been formed, by decree of RVSR (the English translation of the Russian abbreviation for Revolutionary Military Soviet of the Republic) on 15th September 1918³³ and the Western Front yet later still, on the 19th February 1919.³⁴ Therefore, they would have had the possibility of examining the experiences of the two earlier fronts; of course, whether they actually availed themselves of this opportunity is impossible to say at the moment, although, given the similarity, for example, of 6th Army's (Northern Front) instructions on the organisation and functions of the Party cells, it could be assumed that

they did avail themselves of examining the past of the two earlier created fronts.

In October 1918, 6th Army did publish a series of instructions on the organisation and functioning of Party cells in 6th Army.³⁵ The instructions were made up of a series of sections, each of which will be examined and detailed here in turn. The first section was on the organisation of the Party cells and consisted of the following points:

in every Red Army unit, a Party cell of Communists (Bolsheviks) is to be organised from Party members and sympathisers. All members of the Party, serving in any Red Army unit, must become members of the Party cell, no soldier of any unit can join the Party past the cell... The Party cell(collective)is not an organ of state power.³⁶

The latter statement is an interesting one to have made, as it states quite simply that the Party cell was not an organ of the state, but an organ of the Party, ie it emphasises the division that still existed between the Party and the state.

The next section in the instructions dealt with the functions of the Party cells and the latter were divided into four main areas:political-educational,Party work, establishing discipline and ensuring the necessary level of control.³⁷ The first section stated that the Party cells were to conduct:

agitation and propaganda in the Red Army unit of Communist ideas and the elimination, at the roots, of any kind of

counter-revolutionary agitation.³⁸

The other points contained in this particular section were more of an educational nature, emphasising the conduct of the Party cells on educating the men in the broadest sense of the word, therefore the Party cells had to see to the:

the organisation of systematic lessons on political literacy, under the leadership of the local (town) committee.

The setting up of lessons on general educational subjects, under the direction of the the educational department of the military commissariat. Furthering the organisation of the distribution of newspapers and literature on political and military questions; setting up libraries, reading rooms, clubs, etc.³⁹

Thus, this part of the instructions shows the work of the Party cells outside the political apparatus of the unit, ie the inter-connection with the local Party committee and the local military commissariat. The latter contacts would seem to imply that the military situation on the Northern Front was somewhat quieter than elsewhere, otherwise it would not have been possible to hold the necessary political and military instruction in accordance with the local Party committee or the local military commissariat.

The next section of the instructions was also the largest and was mainly concerned with the composition of the Party cell and its attendant executive organ.⁴⁰

Admittance to the Party cell was as a Party member or as a sympathiser. Admittance of new members, needless to say, was slightly more complex:

admittance to the Party of new members is on the basis, approved by the Party's rules and regulations (recommendation of two members, period of time spent as a candidate member, completion of questionnaires, discussion by the local committee and approval by a meeting of the [Party-SM]organisation).⁴¹

Party sympathisers were also allowed to join the cell but, in doing so, had "to attend all sessions of the Party cell and submit themselves to Party discipline."⁴² For its part, the cell could exclude from its composition, "members of the Party, candidate-members and sympathisers, unworthy of the name of Communist."⁴³

The Party cells were then instructed to elect from their membership a staff of three people (a bureau) which would then act as the cells's executive organ. This was designed to keep a check on those who attended the meetings and those who did not and keep a direct link with the local Party committee.⁴⁴ The other main functions of the bureau were to register the members of the cell and distribute work between them.⁴⁵

The final two sections of the instructions were concerned with the functions of the Party cells, in relation to discipline and control. Thus, the Party cell was in charge of:

furthering the organisation of the disciplinary courts,

punishing all crimes. Conducting propaganda about the necessity for the strictest discipline.⁴⁶

In the general area of control, the cells had:

to observe the fulfilment, by all responsible people[those in charge, in other words-SM]of their duties, in accordance with the demands of the Communist Party and Soviet power.⁴⁷

In a separate section of the instructions, the cells were briefed as regards what they should do on immediately being sent to the front:

on being sent to the front, the cells must: combat all forms of deviation and desertion; care about the supply to the units of literature, whilst on the front; maintain strict discipline; combat faint-heartedness, cowardice and pillaging; conduct agitation amongst the neighbouring population.⁴⁸

Thus, as detailed above, it should now be fairly clear that the majority of the Party cells were not working to any specific set of instructions, issued by VBVK or the Party's CC, but very much according to their own devices and how they themselves interpreted their own functions and tasks. In centralising the work of the political apparatus of the Red Army, such a situation could not be tolerated forever and in December 1918, VBVK for apparently the first time in its brief history, held a direct meeting with a number of front political departmental chiefs, at which the tasks and duties of the Party cells were discussed and a document eventually published which was to form the basis of the CC's instructions to front-line Party cells, published in

January 1919.⁴⁹ Obviously, since the meeting involved the direct representation of VBVK and centred on the discussion of the duties of the Party cells, it will be analysed here in detail.

As stated earlier, following the reorganisational shuffle of the Red Army's political apparatus in the autumn of 1918, VBVK was in a much stronger position than it had previously, as regards trying to exert some form of organisational centralisation of the Red Army's front-line political apparatus. This should not be taken to mean that VBVK, after the autumn of 1918, was the dominant political organ for the Red Army, adequately coping with all the demands placed on its shoulders. In fact, VBVK was still to have a tremendous amount of difficulty in trying to exert its authority on the front's political apparatus. However, at least in December 1918, it tried to increase its authority by holding a meeting with the chiefs of the Southern Front's political departments to examine the future tasks and role of the Party cells.⁵⁰ According to a telegram sent by the Southern Front's political departmental chief, I.I.Khodorovsky, the meeting was opened on 3rd December 1918 and, apart from the army political departmental chiefs present, were Yurenev, I.N.Smirnov, D.I.Yefremov and, of course, Khodorovsky himself.⁵¹ Of that particular group, I.N.Smirnov was still serving on the Revolutionary Military Council of the

Eastern front and, as quoted earlier, would have a very good understanding of the problems facing political workers on the Eastern Front.⁵² As constituted, the meeting can be viewed as representing opinion both from the centre-in the person of Yurenev-and the two main fronts at the time-the Eastern and Southern. Hence, whatever was decided upon here would have a potentially significant effect on the work of the front-line political apparatus of the Red Army, as a whole. The agenda for the meeting consisted of the following series of points:

reports from the localities, draft instructions for the Party cells and the position of the political departments, organisational and Party work in the army, cultural-educational work and the current position.⁵³

As regards the Party cells, what the meeting would appear to have worked on was a previous draft series of instructions, prepared by Yefremov, then serving on the 8th Army.⁵⁴ A examination of both this draft set of instructions and the instructions that were published under the guise of the Party's CC, reveals a large number of points where the two documents are virtually saying one and the same thing. According to a later telegram of Yefremov's, the meeting did introduce a number of changes to his original draft series of instructions,⁵⁵ and changes did appear in the CC instructions to the Party cells, issued in January 1919. However, before the instructions were published in January 1919, the CC est-

ablished a special commission to examine the instructions in more detail. In one recent collection of primary documents, the following explanation is to be found:

the draft of these instructions[January 1919 instructions-SM]was worked out at a meeting of workers of the political departments of the Southern front, alongwith representatives of the All-Russian Bureau of Military Commissars, which took place at the beginning of December 1918 and on the 10th December were sent by the political department of 8th Army to Ya.M.Sverdlov.

At a meeting of the bureau of the CC of the RCP(B)on 19th December 1918,, the decision was taken to instruct a commission, consisting of Ya.M.Sverdlov, J.V.Stalin and others to approve the instructions. After several editorial changes and corrections, the draft of the instructions was taken as the basis for the 'Instructions of the CC of the RCP(B)to Party cells...published in the newspaper, 'Izvestiya' ...on 5th January 1919.⁵⁶

Therefore, rather than waste time in discussing both versions of the instructions, ie the draft version prepared by the December meeting and the final version, prepared and published by the CC, it would be much easier and much more profitable to discuss simply what was introduced in January 1919, as a direct result of the December 1918 meeting between VBVK and the Front and Army political departmental chiefs.

The "Instructions of the CC of the RCP(B)to Party cells of the Red Army units of the front and rear"-to give them their full title-were issued on January 5th 1919, although they were not actually published in "Pravda" until the 10th January 1919.⁵⁷

The instructions consisted of 9 separate sections. ranging

from the organisation of the Party cell to their relationship with the press.⁵⁸ In order to cut down on the superfluous detail, only those parts of the instructions of direct relevance to this particular study will be examined here.

The first section, on the organisation of the Party cells, contains a number of fairly familiar points:

1. All members of the Russian Communist Party in the Red Army unit(regiment, division, etc.)will make up the Party cell of the unit.
2. For the organisation of the Party cell, the commissar of the unit, or one of the members of the RCP with the permission of the commissar will announce the convening of an organisational meeting for the formation of the Party cell of the RCP, at which all members of the Party are invited [to attend-SM].⁵⁹

Having organised the cell, the next step was then to elect a commission of three people, instructed to carry out a check of all the members' Party credentials:

3. At the first meeting, in order to check all the presented Party credentials, a commission of three people is selected, one member of whom must be the regimental commissar, if there is one, who must make a report at the next meeting.
4. The second meeting must take place no later than seven days after the first. On hearing the report of the commission, the comrades, who have faultless documents, will be approved at a general meeting as members of the cell.⁶⁰

The next series of points examined the size of the Party cell and the corresponding number of people instructed to carry out the work of the cell on a daily basis.⁶¹ The final point in this section examined the

possibility of there being 10 Party members in the unit:

8. If in the given unit, there are absolutely no members of the Party, the Party cell may be based on candidate members of the Party[appointed-SM]by the commissar, or some specially appointed Party organiser.⁶²

The next large section of the instructions was concerned with listing the main duties and functions of the Party cells and, was, arguably, the most important section of the nine listed in the instructions. The section began thus:

9. On the cells is placed the duty of putting into effect all the decrees of the leading Party organs and institutions.⁶³

This was obviously one of the seminal functions of the Party cells or, at least, it should have been. As regards the functions of the Party cells both in the units and amongst the native local population the instructions continue:

10. To cultivate, by means of propaganda and agitation, amongst its soldier-members a clear and firm class consciousness.

11. To carry out cultural-educational work in the surrounding population. For this purpose, the cell must form a part of the existing cultural-educational commissions of the unit, or themselves create such[commissions-SM]in accordance with the instructions of a higher Party cell or the political department.⁶⁴

It is interesting that before the instructions went on to examine the role of the Party cell as regards the maintenance of discipline and the need to set an example

to the men in the unit, the commission thought it necessary to place a point about the need to carry out propaganda work amongst the local population so prominently. This could well be an indication of how important the Bolsheviks, at the top anyway, thought of agitational work being carried out amongst the ordinary peasants. There was an obvious political, as well as military, gain to be achieved by this. If the work was a success, then the Bolsheviks would be able to increase their support amongst the local population and, as regards the Red Army, hopefully, the peasants would be more obliging in meeting the demands of the locally stationed units for food, horses, shelter where appropriate, etc. The more the work was successfully conducted, the better the short and long-term position of both the Bolsheviks and the Red Army.

The next series of points in this particular section concern the more orthodox role of the Party cells in the areas of discipline and setting a good example to the ordinary rank and file:

12. To mercilessly fight against a breakdown of Party discipline within its own sphere.
13. With all its energy, to render assistance to the commissar and the commander in the fight against a breakdown of Red Army discipline and, in itself, to be an example of the maintenance of such[discipline-SM].
14. To provide an example of utter courage and fortitude in battle, encourage hardiness towards all the difficulties and the deprivations...In the case of the need for volunteers for a dangerous task-spying in the enemy's rear, making up a shock group-to put oneself forward.

15. To bring to the attention of the commissar all disorders and abuses in the unit...
16. The cell must constantly work to bring[together-SM]the Red Army soldiers and local workers and the poor peasants and remove any misunderstanding between them.⁶⁵

Again similar, in some respects, to the post of military commissar, being a member of a Party cell was not meant to grant any particularly special privileges to the members; on the contrary, the burden on the Party cell member was greater than on the ordinary rank and file soldier. It was the Party cell member who had to do all the necessary "volunteering" for all the risky and dangerous field missions that cropped up and, no doubt, the disciplining of Party cell members who displayed cowardice or a lack of metal in the performance of their duties would be particularly severely dealt with, when the time came.

Indeed, in an interview that Trotsky gave a few days before the actual publication of these instructions, Trotsky was keen to emphasise the overall responsibility of the CP members in the cells:

some soldiers imagine that the title of Communist comes with privileges...Communist cells, created in a hurry, have sometimes even shown a desire to compete with the commanders and the commissars and take the running of the unit into their own hands...Party and military authorities must firmly explain that Communists in the Red Army do not have more rights, only more responsibilities than every Red Army soldier.⁶⁶

The necessity of creating a core of Party members, willing to make the supreme sacrifice, was further emphasised in the next point of the instructions:

17. All the work of the Party cell in each Red Army unit must boil down to the task of creating, in the unit, a strong nucleus of Communists and sympathisers, imbued with the realisation of the serious significance of victory on the front for the socialist Motherland, ready at the necessary moment...to lay down their lives for the sake of victory...everywhere fighting against the spread of lies and panic.⁶⁷

The next couple of points examined the role of the Party cell in the conduct of propaganda amongst the troops and, on a somewhat unrelated theme, its relationship to the command staff:

18. For successful Party propaganda, the cell must:
a)concern itself with the distribution of newspapers and literature on political and military matters, b)hold general readings and talks, c)if it is possible, organise lessons on political literacy, etc.
19. The Party cells will not interfere in the activities and orders of the command staff.⁶⁸

The latter point, in particular, a number of the men who served on the CC commission which examined the draft instructions would have personal experience of, ie where the interference of the Party cells in the work of the command staff was not something which the Bolsheviki wanted. Especially in the military arena, where the chain of command and control is vital for the successful conduct of military operations, the interference of the Party

cells in the purely strategic and operational art, it was important that the Bolsheviks stamped on this at the source. The functions of the Party cells in this area had never really been worked out, in any particular detail, but it is true to say that the Bolsheviks had always stood for the non-interference in operational decision-making approach, rather than accepting the possibility that the Party cells had a right or a duty to get involved in such a technical capacity.

The next important section of the instructions concerned the links between the Party cells and the higher Party institutions, although it still did not manage to define clearly enough the relationship between the political department and the Party cell:

29. The Party centre of the of the regiment is the praesidium of the cell.⁶⁹

The praesidium of the Party cell was to consist of three-five people(depending on the overall size of the Party cell)and was to carry out the work of the cell on a general basis.⁷⁰

The other main points in this section were:

30. By decision of the army's political departments, divisional Party bureaux may be created from representatives of the regimental(and other)Party cells.

31. The army and front political departments may convene divisional and army meetings[of Party cells-SM], in order to discuss matters connected with the position of political work in the army.

32. The meetings will not elect any executive organs(bureaux, etc).

33. The Party cells are linked with the Party centres through the political departments at the front and the local committees of the RCP in the rear.⁷¹

The instructions would seem to have come across this particular difficulty and proposed a reasonably practical solution to the problem-although, on saying that, it did not answer the question of who was in charge of the Party cells per se. However, given the conditions at the front, the CC would appear to have opted for the safest way out of the problem:if the Party cell was operating in a front-line military unit, then the front political department was its link with the other Party organs; if, however, the Party cell was operating in a unit in the rear of the Red Army, then the local Party committee was there.

The next section of the instructions was concerned with the relationship of the regimental Party cells to the commissars and the command staff.⁷² Overall, it has to be stated right from the start that the January 1919 instructions did considerably strengthen the power of the commissars in relation to the Party cells. The commissar was made responsible for the organisation of the Party cell⁷³; checking on the Party affiliation of each of its members⁷⁴; granting the commissar the right to call a meeting of the Party cell on a regular basis. etc.⁷⁵

However, in this particular section, the power of the regimental commissar was still further increased:

34. The regimental Party cell has, in the face of the

commissar, approved by a higher Party institution, the leader of Party activity on the front. In the case of a disagreement between the commissar and the Party cell, the latter has the right of appeal to a higher Party organ.⁷⁶

However, it has to be said that the next series of points on the relationship between the two bodies introduced a number of checks on the power of the commissars vis a vis the Party cells:

35. A meeting, convened by the cell to complain about the activities of the commissar, cannot be stopped or postponed by him, unless in conditions of military activity, when it may be postponed for up to seven days only.

36. The commissar cannot rightly hinder the sending of a delegate from the Party cell to the political department, with a report on the nature, or complaints about, his[the commissar's-SM]work.⁷⁷

The final two points in this section were concerned with the Party cell doing its utmost to ensure that the ordinary rank and file soldier had trust in the commissar, as well as trusting the military commander and, in the event of some act of treachery that the Party cell render the commissar all help necessary to liquidate the treason.⁷⁸

The other main sections in the January 1919 instructions were concerned with the adoption and exclusion of members; financing the activities of the Party cell; the duties of the Party cell's praesidium and, finally, the lack of a press organ for the Party cell.⁷⁹ The most interesting point in the remainder of the January 1919 instructions was the point concerning the removal of

members from the Party cell:

43. The expulsion of members from the cell can take place:
a) by decree of the higher and local Party institutions;
b) at the front, by decree of the political department of the army or the front, based on a declaration of a general meeting of the cell or the commissar.⁸⁰

Thus, it was not purely a matter for the Party cell to settle-some higher form of Party organ also had to be involved in the decision-making process.

In assessing the overall importance of the January 1919 instructions, it is very difficult to say anything based on hard documentary evidence. Simply put, there is not enough documentary evidence available for proper examination. All that does exist is a number of generalised statements. For instance, in assessing the overall importance of the January 1919 instructions, one Soviet historian of the Red Army's political apparatus had the following to say in 1928:

in the course of the development of the army-political apparatus, by the end of 1918...all the basic component parts of the system of the Party's leadership of the army were apparent-the far-flung network of lower Party organs, the institute of commissars and the system of political departments. But at the same time, in the work of all these layers of the political apparatus there was a lack of sufficient coordination and harmony, which created a confusion of rights and responsibilities, parallelism, not too rare internal friction, etc. What was necessary was the following step-a unification of all the elements of the army's political apparatus into one centralised and internally unified organisation... The first significant attempt in this area was the publication, by the CC in January 1919, of the instructions to the Party cells, outlining their general tasks and functions.⁸¹

The latter quote obviously placed the January 1919 instructions against the wider background of the disharmony and discord in the Red Army's political apparatus at the time. As has already been detailed, there was a fair amount of disunity in the army's political apparatus and if one looks at the figures concerning the growth in the number of Party cells in the Red Army after January 1919, it can be said that, if nothing else, certainly the January 1919 instructions did not hinder the further development and growth of the Red Army's Party cells.

For example, in February 1919 alone, the number of Party cells in the armies of the Eastern Front increased dramatically-in 1st Army, the number of new Party cells formed in February alone stood at 64; in the 2nd Army, 30 new Party cells were formed in that one month; in 5th Army, 54 new Party cells were formed.⁸² One must assume that the increase in Party cells must have meant a subsequent increase in the number of Party members and sympathisers in the units.

Certainly, this was the case as regards the growth of CP representation in the armies on the Southern Front. As previously noted, by the end of December 1918, in the 8th, 9th and 10th Armies(Southern Front), there were 122 Party cells, 38 groups of Communist sympathisers, totalling some 1,717 CP members and 1,200 sympathisers in the 3 armies

combined.⁸³ By the beginning of February 1919, the figures had increased to 154 Party cells (no separate figure given for the number of groups of Communist sympathisers) combining a total of 3,320 CP members and 2,976 sympathisers.⁸⁴

Assuming that the figures are accurate and that a similar trend could have been detected on the other fronts, it would appear that the trend towards the increase in numbers of Party cells in the Red Army, with the subsequent increase in the number of CP members and their sympathisers, can be partially explained by the publication and the putting into effect of the January 1919 instructions. Hence, Geronimus' earlier statement on the subject would appear to have been a fairly accurate reflection of what did happen to the Red Army's political apparatus at the time—an increase in the centralisation of the Red Army's political apparatus, with more control of the latter being put in to the hands of the political departments.

However, in all of this, it is very difficult, almost impossible, to find any link with the centralised political apparatus in Moscow. Indeed, other than VBVK's brief discussion with the chiefs of the political departments of the Southern Front in December 1918, VBVK's contact with the Party cells would appear to have been on a very limited basis. Even though VBVK was still not,

technically, a Party-organ, it was, nonetheless, the organ in charge of the Party's political apparatus in the Red Army and should have been expected to play a much more prominent role in the development and functioning of the apparatus than the one just described. However, the real challenge to the continued functioning of VBVK came not from the Party cells, or even the military commissars, but the organ for the control and operation of the Red Army's political apparatus at the front-the political departments.

NOTES(1):

- 1.A.Geronimus, "Osnovnye printsipy partiino-politicheskoi raboty v RKKA v mirnoe i voennoe vremya." Leningrad, 1930. p.26.
- 2.S.S.Khromov, "Grazhdanskaya voina i voennaya interventsia v SSSR. Entsiklopediya." M.1983, p.442.
- 3."X let Krasnoi Armii. Albom diagramm." M.1928, p.44.
- 4.Ibid.
- 5.Ibid.
- 6.Ibid.
- 7.Ibid., p.42.
- 8.I.Petukhov, "Partiinaya organizatsiya i partiinaya rabota v RKKA." Moscow-Leningrad, 1928, p.22.
- 9.G.D.Lindov, "O politicheskoi rabote i politicheskikh rabotnikakh na fronte." Kharkov, 1919, p.5.
- 10.Ye.Babin, "Kak organizovat rotnye yacheyki(po dokladu tov. Podvoiskogo)." Kiev, 1919.
- 11.Babin, "Kak organozovat...", Kiev, 1919, p.3.
- 12.Ibid.
- 13.Ibid., pp.3-5.
- 14.Ibid., p.5.
- 15.Ibid., p.6.
- 16.Babin, "Kak organizovat...", p.6.
- 17.Ibid., p.7.

NOTES(2):-

18. "Godovshchina pervoi revoliutsionnoi armii." M.1920, p.32.

19. A.Geronimus, "Osnovnye momenty razvitiya partiino-politicheskogo apparata Krasnoi Armii v 1918-1920 gg." ("Grazhdanskaya voina, 1918-1921." Vol.2, M.1928, p.116).

20. "Perepiska Sekretariata TsK RKP(B) s mestnymi partiynymi organizatsiyami, (avgust-oktyabr 1918 g.). Sbornik dokumentov." Vol.4, M.1969, p.74.

21. R.Service, "The Bolshevik Party in revolution, 1917-1923. A study in organisational change." London, 1979, p.94.

22. "Perepiska Sekretariata...", vol.4, p.74.

23. "Partiino-politicheskaya rabota v Krasnoi Armii (aprel 1918-fevral 1919). Dokumenty." Vol.1, M.1961, pp.199-200.

24. Ibid., pp.203-4.

25. Ibid., p.250.

26. Ibid., p.261.

27. Ibid., p.254.

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid., p.258.

30. Ibid., p.273.

31. Ibid., p.274.

32. Ibid.

33. Khromov, "Grazhdanskaya voina...", p.527.

34. Ibid., p.216.

35. "Partiino-politicheskaya rabota...", vol.1, p.309.

36. Ibid.

NOTES(3):-

37. "Partiino-politicheskaya rabota..." , pp.309-10.
38. Ibid., p.310.
39. Ibid.
40. Ibid.
41. Ibid.
42. Ibid.
43. Ibid.
44. Ibid., p.311.
45. Ibid., p.311.
46. Ibid.
47. Ibid.
48. Ibid.
49. "Perepiska Sekretariata TsK RKP(B) s mestnymi partiynymi organizatsiyami(noyabr-dekabr 1918 g.). Sbornik dokumentov." Vol.5, M.1970, pp.365-69.
50. Ibid., p.365-69.
51. Ibid., pp.359-60.
52. "Direktivy komandovaniya frontov Krasnoi Armii(1917-1922). Sbornik dokumentov v 4-kh tomakh." Vol.4, M.1978, p.529.
53. "Perepiska Sekretariata...", vol.5, p.360.
54. Ibid., pp.365-70.
55. "Partiino-politicheskaya rabota...", vol.1, pp.50-4.
56. "Perepiska Sekretariata...", vol.5, p.370.

NOTES(4):-

57. "Partiino-politicheskaya rabota...", vol.1, pp.50-4.
58. Ibid.
59. Ibid., p.50.
60. Ibid.
61. Ibid., p.50.
62. Ibid.
63. Ibid.
64. Ibid., p.51.
65. Ibid.
66. "Izvestiya Mossovieta." 29/12/1918.
67. "Partiino-politicheskaya rabota...", vol.1, p.51.
68. Ibid.
69. Ibid., p.52.
70. Ibid.
71. Ibid.
72. "Partiino-politicheskaya rabota..." pp.52-3.
73. Ibid., p.50.
74. Ibid., p.51.
75. Ibid., pp.51-2.
76. Ibid., pp.52-3.
77. Ibid., p.53.
78. Ibid.
79. Ibid., pp.53-5.
80. Ibid., p.53.

NOTES(5):-

81.Geronimus, "Osnovnye momenty razvitiya...", M.1928,
p.42.

82."Partiino-politicheskaya rabota...", p.227.

83.Ibid., p.261.

84.Ibid., p.289.

CHAPTER TWO (SECTION FOUR):-

VBVK AND THE RED ARMY'S POLITICAL DEPARTMENTS (JUNE 1918-APRIL 1919).

In the last section, the role and duties of the Party cells were described, as well as the nature of their relationship with VBVK. As stated in the conclusion to the last section, at that time, the main influence on the general conduct of political work did not emanate from the central political apparatus, but more from organs, which were placed infinitely closer to the needs and demands emanating from the front itself-most noticeably, the Red Army's political departments. The latter were brought into being by a mixture of local initiative and a particularly local perception of what was needed, rather than by any one decree, being issued from the centre. In effect, they came into being almost as a direct response to the lack of control emanating from the central political apparatus, and thereby ensured a measure of control and coordination of the political and cultural-educational work being carried out at the front. Throughout 1918-1919, the power of the political departments slowly, but surely, increased as the demand and need for greater centralised control grew. Certainly,

even before the creation of the Political Administration of the Revolutionary Military Soviet of the Republic(hereinafter referred to by the English transliteration of the Russian abbreviation, PUR)in May 1919, the Red Army's political departments were playing a substantial role in the political and cultural education of the men in the Red Army.

Overall then, even at this relatively early stage, it would be reasonably safe to begin this section by stating, at the outset, that the political departments played a key role in the development and work of the Red Army's political apparatus at the front. This particular section will seek to analyse the following main points, as regards the history and activity of the political departments at this time: first of all, the creation and development of the political departments during VBVK's period of power; secondly, their relationship to VBVK during 1918-1919; thirdly, their relationship to the other political and cultural-educational organisations in the units; fourthly, their powers and duties within the Red Army at this time, and, finally, a comprehensive assessment of their overall role in the Red Army in 1918-1919.

(i) The creation and growth of the network of political departments on the Eastern Front (June-December 1918)

Having examined a number of primary and secondary source materials on the topic, it would appear that there seems to be an element of confusion, as regards the creation of the first political department in the Red Army. In Fedotoff White's history of the Red Army, quoting a early Soviet source, the latter stated that:

attempts at the political guidance of the front units were apparently made as early as December 1917. The official Soviet history of the Civil War makes mention of the establishment of a political department at the H.Q. of the Commander in Chief of the Soviet troops in the south. This department published a politico-military paper. In this way, at a very early date, the political control of the army units began to develop.¹

If one does go back to the original source, then one finds that Fedotoff White has indeed taken the relevant piece of evidence, virtually word for word, from A.Geronimus' brief essay on the history of the Red Army's political apparatus:

at this time on the front [December 1917-SM], attached to the staff headquarters of our troops in the south was created a political department, which published a military-political newspaper.²

Unfortunately, Geronimus did not provide any further information on this political department and, other than the fact that he saw fit to mention it in his essay, there is no other piece of evidence, currently available, to

support his contention that this department can be considered as an early forerunner to the political departments that were to crop up in the Red Army in the spring-summer of 1918. Indeed, all the other Soviet historians who have written on this particular matter have argued that the earliest known political department created in the Red Army was created on what was to become the Eastern Front, in June 1918 and, as will be described below, there certainly would appear to be wholesale agreement on this by a large number of Soviet historians. As regards Geronimus' statement, it certainly would appear to be worthy of mention but, without any further evidence, almost impossible to verify. After all, the Red Army had commissars serving in its ranks at that time and yet the commissars which were to serve in the units of the Red Army in the spring-summer 1918 were not identical to those which served in the military units in late 1917-early 1918. Therefore, it could be the case that there was a political department, of some description, serving in the military units of the south, supportive of the Bolshevik regime, but whether this political department bore any real resemblance to the future political departments of the Red Army would have to be left open to question. For the time being, it probably would be a good idea just to return to the established views on the origins of the Red Army's first identifiable political department, bearing in

mind Geronimus' earlier statement.

According to a recent history of the Red Army's political apparatus, the first political department of the Red Army came into being in early June 1918:

on the 11th June 1918, a political department was formed attached to the staff H.Q. of the North-Urals-Siberian Front, from which was later formed 3rd Army. The political department was organised by representatives of the Supreme Military Inspectorate, carrying out work for the creation of units of the Red Army in an area of military activity directed against the White Guard Czech insurgents.³

This view of the creation of the Red Army's first political department has been similarly argued for in such works as E.F.Krivosheenkova, "Sozdanie i deyatelnost politorganov armiy Vostochnogo fronta s interventami i belogvardeitsami(1918-1920 gg.)"(M.1972)⁴; V.G.Kolychev's "Partiino-politicheskaya rabota v Krasnoi Armii v gody grazhdanskoi voyny. 1918-1920."(M.1979)⁵ and, finally, V.M.Portnov and M.M.Slavin, "Pravovye osnovy stroitelstva Krasnoi Armii. 1918-1920 gg."(M.1985)⁶.

If the ~~above~~ statement is historically correct (and there certainly would appear to be one good piece of historical evidence to support the latter), then the statement does raise a number of interesting points, not least of which is that the political department would appear to have been brought into being as a partial response to a direct military threat, rather than meeting

specific political requirements emanating from Moscow or, for that matter, the local Party headquarters. The involvement of the Supreme Military Inspectorate-and not, it should be stressed, VBVK- is also worthy of further comment, as it would appear to demonstrate the latter's lack of control and initiative, even at this early stage, in the organisation of political work at the front. This would seem to indicate a pattern that was to be repeated in the months ahead.

As regards the accuracy of the claim that the above was the Red Army's first political department, as previously stated, there is one good piece of factual evidence, available to the researcher, which helps to shed light on the work and initial responsibilities of this particular political department. In a early Civil War journal published on the Red Army's Eastern Front in 1919, an article was published entitled, "the work of the political department of 3rd Army to 1st November 1918".⁷ The article began with examining the thinking that led to the creation of this political department and, similar to the previous statement quoted earlier, would again demonstrate that the political department was created in direct response to an actual military threat:

in order to counteract the agitation of the White Guard agents, it became vitally obvious that the broadest possible agitation was conducted, both by the written and the spoken word, and that political work be strengthened.⁸ This stimulated the creation of the political department.

The article continued to list the immediate background to the creation of the political department:

the political department was founded on about the 20th June[a date supported by Krivosheenkova in her work-SM]. However, the first period of its existence was spent in Ekaterinburg and lasted from 20th June-26th July. The department developed only slightly its activity and the composition of its staff was fairly limited(chief, a secretary and 2-3 responsible assistants and technical personnel...Political representatives in the localities(on important railway junctions and at the front)were subordinated to the political department, who had to send in reports on their work...and receive, in return, papers and leaflets for distribution amongst the troops and the civilian population.⁹

Thus, it would appear that, initially, the political department saw its role as being in the general area of agitational work, both amongst the troops and the local civilian population. Given the apparent threat emanating from the White Guardist forces operating in the vicinity, this would appear to have been the primary duty of the political department then but, as will be shown, as the situation developed and the power of the political department grew, the functions and duties of the political department changed as well:

the work of the department significantly increased at the beginning of August when, after a short stay at Kushve, the H.Q. and its political department were moved to Perm. Then, almost the entire department was split into a number of sections...the following sections were created: information, literary-agitational, expeditionary and publications. Agitational work, formerly completely irregular and sporadic, began to be put right with the creation of a special section and the arrival of agitators from the centre.¹⁰

In detailing these changes, the report then went on to list the functions of each of these sections:

the work has been allocated thus, the information section is in charge of registering radio and agency telegrams, the compilation of daily political secret reports, the compilation of operational reports for the newspapers, [the compilation of-SM]reports on the political life on the front...the literary-agitational section is mainly in charge of the distribution of agitators and the leadership of their work;the publications' section is in charge of the publication of newspapers, brochures, leaflets, bulletins, etc; the expeditionary section is in charge of sending to literature to the front.¹¹

Thus, as contained in the above extracts from the report, it is obvious that the political department, at least as it initially came in to being, was more concerned with the direction and conduct of a broad agitational campaign than anything else. As revealed by one of the USSR's leading historians on the topic, the political departments were also useful in providing the military commissars with some sort of back-up, in the performance of their duties:

at the beginning of their activity, the political departments played the role of an administrative-political apparatus for the military commissars, helping them in the organisation of political and cultural-educational work, implementing control over the military specialists, the placing of military commissars in the units...they[the political departments-SM]assumed a broad range of functions, right down to the registration of the men.¹²

Following on from the creation of the Red Army's first-or, at least, potentially first-Army political department, it was not too long before the first political

department, designed to take control of the political activity of a whole front, came in to being. Although there is some confusion as to the exact date-as will be shown below-of the creation of the first Front political department, there is general agreement about the approximate circumstances surrounding its creation. As one modern account states:

in July 1918, the political department of the Eastern Front was formed-the first political organ at front-level. Its creation was led by members of the Revolutionary Military Soviet, K.Kh.Danishevsky and K.A.Mekhonoshin, and the head of the political department was I.N.Smirnov.¹³

A slightly more revealing account of the formation of the Eastern Front's political department-and one that leads to the confusion of dating the precise formation of the political department-can be found in A.Geronimus' essay on the Red Army's political apparatus in the Civil War, published in a collection of essays on the Civil War in 1928:

by[decree-SM]the Revolutionary Military Soviet of the Eastern Front, whilst it was still headed by Muraviev, a Political department was created, split into a number of sections(agitational-literary, publishing, information and communications, etc). The lack of any significant traces of its activity allows us to conclude that the work of this first front political department had no decisive significance.¹⁴

Although the latter statement can be viewed as being slightly contentious, to say the least, Geronimus' statement that the front political department was created

whilst Muraviev was in charge of the Eastern Front does begged to be examined, as, almost in the same breath, Geronimus throws a lot of cold water on this piece of chronology by stating that the Eastern Front's political department came in to force by a decree of the Eastern Front's Revolutionary Military Soviet, dated 22nd July 1918. Judging by a number of accounts of the Civil War, Muraviev had quit the Bolshevik cause, so to speak, certainly no later than 11th July 1918¹⁵-therefore, it would appear that Geronimus has simply made a mistake about the chronology of the events he has described.

Thus, putting all the necessary pieces of information together-and leaving aside the details concerning the exact formation of the Eastern Front's political department-it would appear that the first Front political department bore a remarkable resemblance to the earlier created Army political department, both in terms of organisational structure and, on the face of it, functions and duties. The emphasis, at the time, would appear to have been on the political departments conducting agitational work, both amongst the soldiers and the civilian population, although as the tasks grew more complicated, then the whole structure of both the political departments at Front- and Army-level changed to match the new tasks placed before it. Needless to say, the political departments would appear to have been

more dynamic organs than anything else that had been created, or organised, before them. They appeared to respond to the need, both felt actually at the front and in the centre, for an apparatus that could more readily respond to the political and cultural-educational needs of the men serving at the front. This should not be taken to mean that all the political problems of the Bolsheviks in the Red Army were solved instantly with the creation and growth in the political departments-as will be shown below, problems still remained for the Bolsheviks and the political departments to solve-but with the creation of the Red Army's first political department in the summer of 1918, the Bolsheviks had taken a big step towards more effectively controlling and coordinating the political work that they thought important to the waging of the Civil War.

As stated above, with the creation of the first political department, a dynamic seems to have been set in motion which saw the creation of other political departments on the Eastern Front. In 3rd Army, the first divisional departments were created¹⁶; not long after that, apparently, another Army political department came into being "in the second half of June 1918"-1st Army's political department had been created.¹⁷

Whilst it is, as yet, difficult to say precisely what ~~are~~ the exact conditions that gave rise to the political

departments, it would seem that a great role in their creation and organisation belonged to the Revolutionary Military Soviets-it should be noted, for instance, that the Army- and Front-political departments were subordinated to the control of the relevant Army- and Front-level Revolutionary Military Soviets.¹⁸ Therefore, in examining the background to the creation of the political departments, it would be worthwhile to attempt to ascertain the role of the relevant Revolutionary Military Soviets(hereinafter referred to simply as RMS). One way to try and work out a connection between the relevant political departments and the RMS is to examine their personnel composition and see if there is a link-up there and, overall, there would appear to be a very strong tie-up indeed.

As we already know, the three men who are identified as having played a crucial role in the creation of the Red Army's first political department-Danishevsky, Mekhonoshin and I.N.Smirnov-were all members of the Eastern Front's RMS in July-August 1918, not long after the actual creation of the political department.¹⁹ Similarly, if we examine the personnel composition of the RMS of 3rd and 1st Armies respectively, we find a number of men there who played an important role in the Red Army's political apparatus, either at a local level or, even, at a national level. For instance, in June-July 1918, amongst the

members of the RMS of 1st Army were such prominent political figures in the future history of the Red Army's political apparatus as O.Yu.Kalnin and V.V.Kuibyshev.²⁰

As regards the political composition of the RMS of 3rd Army, then one only has to realise that no less a personage than the future head of PUR itself-I.T.Smilga-was a member of the former to testify that, indeed, there would appear to be strong evidence to support the claim that the link between the political departments and the RMS was a strong one. A number of the key personnel in the RMS would certainly appeared to have, at least, doubled up and worked in the relevant political departments. Given the scarcity of experienced Party figures, this should not come about as too much of a surprise-after all, there were plenty of instances, both in the past and in the future, when experienced Party workers had to satisfy the demands of a number of posts, held concurrently.

In a report published in December 1918, but partially referring to the early history of the political apparatus on the Eastern Front, the author of the report-I.N.Smirnov-described the early problems and tasks that awaited the newly formed political apparatus:

before September 1918, political work in the army was uncoordinated. The general position at the front can be described thus: both the command staff and the political workers had to strain every nerve in order to overcome the separation of isolated armies. If, up until the present day, there were cases when separate military groups

appealed directly to the Chairman of the CC or Sovnarkom on military and supply matters, then in political work this happened all the time.²¹

What was so special about the events of September 1918 that the actual month deserved special mention is difficult to ascertain. Certainly, there would appear to have been no special CC decision or set of instructions issued, relevant to the proper functioning of the Red Army's political apparatus; it could be that Smirnov was making a reference to the decisions made by a particular congress of political workers of the Eastern Front- although, on saying that, the only such congress known to have taken place was a congress of political workers of the Eastern Front's 1st Army held in late September 1918, not known for any particularly unique degree of radical decision making.²² In other words, without access to the relevant information, it is impossible to say precisely why Smirnov decided that September 1918 was the beginning of the more coordinated work of the Eastern Front's political apparatus.

The feeling of "separatism", referred to by Smirnov, was a symptom of one of the main problems facing the Red Army's political apparatus at that time-the difficulty in centralising and coordinating an apparatus that was badly disjointed. The political departments, working, as they did, so close to the front, knew that if the political departments were not able to centralise the work of the

apparatus, then the political and cultural-educational work that they were designed to carry out would be much harder to do. Certainly, as previously described in the previous sections, the Red Army's political apparatus strongly needed a degree of centralism in its work if it were to improve its overall effectiveness. Separatism, in whatever form it took, could only do harm to the successful conduct of the necessary agitational, political and cultural-educational work to be carried out. Hence, in his report, Smirnov made special reference to the creation of a Political department which, despite its rather brief history, as will be detailed later, was an attempt by the political and military centre to try and increase the coordination and control of political work being carried out on the front:

the creation of a Political department, attached to the Revolutionary Military Soviet of the Republic, had to put an end to the amateurish attempts of political activity, although the separatism is only overcome with great difficulty. Overcoming it is necessary, otherwise it will not be possible to correctly distribute Party strength over the fronts and armies.²³

The creation of a political department, attached to the highest military organ of the Republic, in effect, should have allowed the Bolsheviks more of a chance to more fully centralise the work of the Red Army's political apparatus but, as was happening with VBVK at the time, the lack of the necessary information flowing in to the Political

department of RVSR seriously hampered its work and it was not too long before the organ was abolished and a strengthened VBVK took its place, as will be detailed later on in this section.

Further on in his report, Smirnov went on to analyse the organisation and work of the Army political departments, as they had grown since the summer of 1918:

each army has a political department, usually consisting of 12-15 comrades. They are divided into groups: organisation, agitation, cultural-educational and publications. All Communists, arriving in the armies, are registered in the department and distributed according to the needs of the regiments and squads.²⁴

Apparently, Smirnov always tried to ensure that in each regiment there was a group of Communists of between 10-20 men to carry out the necessary work.²⁵ Problems which the political departments encountered in their work on the Eastern Front were, according to Smirnov's report, parallelism with the work of the Army committees²⁶; the relative youthfulness of the majority of the Party members sent to the political departments and, finally, the actual total number of Communists in each of the armies.²⁷ As Smirnov himself stated in the report:

about 80% of the people who have passed through my hands are Bolsheviks of 17 and 18 years old. Chiefs of political departments in the army despair of such workers and continue to send in demands for workers with longer Party memberships.²⁸

Smirnov also expressed a degree of caution, as regards the

total numbers of Communists in the armies, arguing that if the armies were brought up to full military strength, but there was no corresponding increase in the numbers of Party members, then the situation for the Party control of the armies could decidedly worsen:

in the 1st Army, there are about 250 Communists, in the 2nd Army there are about 300, in the 3rd Army, there are about 2,000 men, in the 4th Army, there are about 1,400 and in the 5th Army, there are about 600 members. With this strength, we can hold the army in our hands, but if we bring the regiments up to full strength, then the armies will increase 3-4 times. If the number of Communists remains the same, then here will lie for us a great danger.²⁹

Smirnov's proposed solution to this potentially tricky situation was to increase the number of Red officers, who could effectively combine the functions of commander and commissar and relieve some of the burden on the shoulders of the political departments.³⁰

Thus, at least as regards the development of the political departments on the Eastern Front, it would appear that the latter had gradually transformed themselves from being part of the military-administrative apparatus to taking on the responsibilities of being the leading organs for political work on the front. The political departments had to face the twin problems of parallelism and separatism and, in attempting to unite the political apparatus, as a whole, still faced an added danger of being viewed as being cut off from the mass of the

soldiers themselves, the people that they were supposed primarily to serve. This was made clear in a very early account of the work of the Eastern Front's political apparatus, published whilst the Civil War was still raging, in actual fact:

for a long time, one saw the alienation of the political departments from the Red Army mass. Even although the political departments were decreed[a probable reference to the decree of 5th December 1918 which granted them official recognition-SM], there were still no instructions for their work:everything was based on personal initiative. One must not negate the importance of personal initiative but, in this instance, it very slowly proved itself.³¹

In order to combat this feeling of alienation between the political departments and the soldiers, this particular author proposed that the burden of political work be shifted away from the Army and Front political departments and onto the regimental and divisional political departments, a proposal that, in actual fact, was to be put into effect after the 8th Party Congress in March 1919.³²

Before leaving the analysis of the work of the political departments on the Eastern Front, for the time being, one other work of the period worthy of analysis, was written by a former military commissar of 4th Army-G.D.Lindov-and published in 1919.³³ As a front-line military commissar, Lindov was in an ideal position to examine the apparatus from the inside so to speak and,

where necessary propose changes in its structure. As regards the tasks and organisation of the political departments, Lindov had actually quite a lot to say and it is to a description of the latter that we now turn.

He began his section on the political departments by stating that the political departments had a dual set of functions to perform-"one Party, the other military".³⁴ Given the nature of the functions of the military commissars, the Party cells and, most probably, the Army committees, it could easily be argued that each and every part of the Red Army's political apparatus, at that time, had a dual set of functions to perform. He elucidated the point still further, by stating that the twin tasks of the political departments, as he saw it, were "to direct and lead the activities of the Party workers in the army" and "to carry out the tasks, placed on the commissars."³⁵ Curiously enough, in his interpretation of matters, he viewed the latter as the political department carrying out its military duties, a view which, arguably, under valued the role of the military commissars in the political sphere. In his further description of the organisational structure of the political department, Lindov seems to have been drawing on some sort of ideal organisational structure, one which is almost impossible, at the present time, to examine as being of much relevance to the real, practical activity of the political departments. In his

ideal vision of the Army political department, Lindov argued that the political department should consist of the following sub-departments:organisation-agitation;literary-publications; cultural-educational;information and communications; a military court and, finally, a secretariat.³⁶ Some of the sub-departments he thought would have to be further sub-divided into a number of sub-sections, thereby leading to a fairly complex organisational structure, much more complicated than the original political departmental structure. Overall, the army political department, as viewed by Lindov, would carry out a wide range of functions, ranging from purely agitational work to organising communes of poor peasants in the local villages.³⁷ As stated earlier, though, it has to be stressed that this would appear to have been a set of ideal views of the political department and, as will be shown below, the latter did not really come into effect until the later stages of the Civil War. Still, in view of the fact that Lindov was a front-line commissar, his views on the whole subject of the political departments are worth bearing in mind.

Throughout the autumn of 1918, the political apparatus on the Eastern Front continued to develop, with an increased role for the political departments. On 1st September 1918, a "chief political commissar" was appointed-F.I.Goloshchekin-who was placed in charge of not

only political work in the vicinity of 3rd Army, but also placed in charge of its staff political department.³⁸ A few days after that appointment, V.V.Kuibyshev, as chief of the political department of 1st Army, made a report on latter's activity, in which he especially noted the work of the political department in the surrounding villages:

oral and written agitation have achieved favourable results, committees of the poor are being organised, the local soviets are being strengthened, cultural-educational work is being carried out. In the villages, about 200 libraries have been organised. A front newspaper is being published, it has a circulation of 10,000 copies...in total, there are 200 Communists working in the army, although it should be noted that recently from the centre, they have sent us very poor agitators, who can only be used with difficulty.³⁹

Thus, despite the success of some of the work being carried out, Kuibyshev was not slow in complaining about a poor bunch of agitators being sent out from the centre and yet, regardless of complaints, the pace of development of the political apparatus still gathered momentum. At the beginning of September 1918, the political department of 2nd Army published a series of instructions on the "responsibilities of the military commissars" operating in the units of 2nd Army. On 9th September 1918, Goloshchekin published an order on the creation of divisional and brigade political departments, subordinate to 3rd Army's staff political department.⁴⁰ At the end of the month, as mentioned briefly earlier, the First Congress of Communists of 1st Army was held at Ruzaevka,

at which, amongst other things, the organisation of divisional political departments was discussed.⁴¹ Therefore, throughout the month of September 1918, a number of moves were made which, in different ways, further redefined the structure or the tasks of the political departments on the Eastern Front. Again, what has to be underlined is the distinct lack of involvement of VBVK in all this activity. This refers back to the criticism about the reliance on personal initiative and the lack of any centralised instructions. Indeed, as has been shown by the examination of the Eastern Front's political apparatus, VBVK was simply not involved at any level. The political departments were not borne out of any particular initiative emanating from the centre and, to all intents and purposes, were very much left to their own, as regards the conduct of the necessary agitational, political and cultural-educational work. However, in October 1918, a congress did take place on the Eastern Front at which one of the central political organs-the Political department of RVSR- seems to have been involved, even if only partially. Given the overall importance of the congress, as regards the future development of the political apparatus on the Eastern Front, especially the political departments, it will now be analysed in detail here.

Between 21st-24th October 1918, in the city of

Simbirsk, a congress was held of the chiefs of political departments of the armies of the Eastern Front.⁴² One Soviet historian, in evaluating the overall importance of the meeting has dubbed the congress "practically the first all-army meeting of political workers."⁴³ Although there is some doubt as to who actually decided to convene such a congress-it was either the Party's CC or RVSR's Political department⁴⁴, there can be little doubt about its importance to the future development of the Red Army's political apparatus-unfortunately, despite its importance, the congress has received very little attention by Soviet scholars of the subject, presumably because of the people involved, rather than the subjects touched upon at the congress. Only one Soviet historian has spent any real time on analysing the meeting and, so, the bulk of what follows has largely been derived from his own account of the meeting. Where possible, things have been checked but that has only been possible in a very few instances.

Other than representatives of the Eastern Front's political apparatus, it would appear that the only other political representatives at the meeting came from the Supreme Military Inspectorate, somewhat apt given the fact that the latter did play an important role in the establishment of the Red Army's first political department in the summer of 1918.⁴⁵ There would appear to have been no representative from VBVK; RVSR's Political department

was, however, represented at the congress, by its chief- the self-same I.N.Smirnov, who had been appointed to head the Political department of RVSR in October 1918.⁴⁶ It should be noted, though, that a number of invitations to the meeting did go out, only that the invited delegates were not able to attend: these included the Chief of the political department of the Southern Front, D.I.Yefremov and representatives from the Operations' Department of the People's Commissariat of Military Affairs.⁴⁷

According to Nenarokov's research, the main aims of the congress were:

on the basis of the experience of the work of the Party-political apparatus of the Eastern Front, to instil a uniform system for the construction of the leading Party-propagandistic organs, to work out the structure of the political departments and demarcate their work.⁴⁸

Judging by what was said at the congress, the latter would seem to have gone a long way to realising the demands of the congress. Needless to say, Smirnov was to play an important role at the congress and, in his first speech to the congress, chose as his first point for discussion the parallelism in the functioning of the two central political organs-VBVK and RVSR's Political department.⁴⁹ In this part of his speech, Smirnov stated plainly the functions of the two organs at the time:

at this time, the Political department of the Revolutionary Military Soviet of the Republic works mainly for the front and, most of all, for the Eastern Front; the activity of Communists in the rear military units is led

by the Bureau of Military Commissars.⁵⁰

According to Nenarokov's work Smirnov proposed that the two organs be united and rid the central political apparatus of this parallelism.⁵¹ Indeed, without jumping ahead too much, this did happen: on 13th November 1918, RVSR issued an order fusing the two organs together.⁵² Yurenev was still left in charge of the newly constituted VBVK, though.

Smirnov then went on to discuss the work of the Eastern Front's political apparatus, especially as it had affected the organisation of the local soviets and the committees of the poor.⁵³ According to one delegate, 1st Army's political department alone had created 140 committees of the poor and aided the rebuilding of other Party and Soviet organs, in regions closest to the front.⁵⁴ However, despite the importance of the political departments in the overall area of rebuilding or creating various other Soviet and Party organs, Smirnov argued that one of the main tasks of the whole political apparatus on the Eastern Front was the establishment of a link with Party workers, operating in the enemy's rear.⁵⁵

In his second address to the congress, Smirnov returned to highlighting the lack of any real contact between VBVK and RVSR's Political department, stating that:

between them, as yet, a link has not been established."⁵⁶

Without a proper link being established between the two organisations, Smirnov saw a major problem ahead in the future development of the Red Army's political apparatus:

the Bureau carries out political work in the rear, the Political department on the front...but in the front-line zone, it is difficult to delineate their spheres of activity.⁵⁷

Obviously, in many respects, Smirnov's fears for the future were fully justified and, as shown earlier, it was surely no coincidence that within a few weeks of such fears being expressed at the congress, that both the central political organs were fused into one. Smirnov's criticism must have been taken to heart by the relevant military and political leadership and acted upon swiftly.

Following on from Smirnov's comments and the wider mention of the activity of the political department of 1st Army, the representative from 3rd Army's political department came to the forum and told the other delegates about the wider cooperation between 3rd Army's political department and the local Soviet and Party organs, closest to the front. In his speech, the delegate openly admitted that such cooperation existed:

the political department coordinates its work with the local okrug and guberniya military commissars and also with the guberniya land department.⁵⁸

Due to this coordination of work, 3rd Army's political

department was able to report on the creation of 30 committees of the poor, the distribution of literature in more than 39 places, the creation of 4 village libraries and the setting up of a "mobile theatre".⁵⁹

Thus, as detailed above, it would appear that the term, "political work" took on a much broader meaning than simply agitating in the ranks of the Red Army or conducting some form of political work solely within the confines of the military units. The political departments would also have appeared to have played a not insignificant role in the organisation of the committees of the poor, the reconstruction of the soviets, the establishment of a basic cultural-educational apparatus, etc. A whole range of political and cultural-educational activity would appear to have been embarked upon in order to further strengthen Bolshevik power where it mattered most, ie in the villages. After all, the vast majority of the Bolshevik soldiers were peasants and, certainly, it was absolutely essential that the Bolsheviks retained the support of the peasantry in the best possible way. Therefore, it did the Bolsheviks no harm at all in ensuring that the peasants were looked after, even by the Red Army's political apparatus at the front.

In the resolutions of the congress, partially quoted by Nenarokov, it was stated that:

with the development of the activity of the political departments, the military capability of the armies is

raised, because firm control of the command staff has been introduced; from regularly held meetings, the consciousness of the mass is strengthened; the correct distribution of literature is regularised and the front-line zone is brought to the fore, where the armies can create the committees of the poor and smash the White Guard, kulak and right-wing socialist organisations.⁶⁰

The congress also proposed the following organisational structure for the Army political departments and, in some respects, it did bear a striking resemblance to that proposed by Lindov and described earlier. According to the congress' resolution, the political department was to consist of the following sub-departments:

information, agitation, literary-publication, a peasant section and a sub-department of staff commissars.⁶¹

Unfortunately, there is no indication of the precise functions of any of these sub-departments, although the functions of the majority of the sub-departments should be fairly self-evident.

Although Nenarokov ends his analysis of the work of the congress by quoting part of the final resolution on the need for the central political apparatus to coordinate its work,⁶² it is possible to take our study of the congress one stage further by examining some of the other resolutions of the congress. It would appear that Nenarokov did not use the collection of resolutions of the congress, which were published in the collection of documents on Party-political work in the Red Army during

the Civil War, published in 1961. Of this particular collection of the congress' resolutions, the most relevant of them are the following:

political work in the army is carried out in conditions which do not allow a regular link with local organisations. However, the political departments do have the job of using all the existing local Party organs, working in contact with them, joining the existing committees and soviets, if the army is in one place for a long time and, in the event of a short stay, the army is required to set up an information bureau[working-SM]with the local Party organs. The political departments are responsible for helping to create soviet and Party organs in the localities.⁶³

As previously detailed above, the political departments were already helping the creation of the local soviets and Party organs, when and where needed. This particular resolution can be viewed as formally strengthening a role that the political departments were already quietly fulfilling.

Looking at the other resolutions in the collection, the only other one worthy of serious examination is the very last resolution, actually published in the collection. This was concerned with the overall organisation of the political apparatus at the centre and, curiously enough, made no mention of the role, or the importance, of either VBVK or RVSR's Political department:

political work in the entire army is led by the Central Committee of the Party, which issues directives to the chiefs of the political departments of the Soviet republic. A close organisational link between the political departments...and the Central Committee of the

Party is necessary.⁶⁴

Unfortunately, it has not been possible to trace any of these CC directives, which were supposed to have been issued to the political departments. It is also somewhat surprising that the resolution made no mention of the role of RVSR's political department, after all, the latter was supposed to be in charge of political work being carried out at the front and, as already shown, the Political department of RVSR had been discussed at the congress. The lack of any mention of VBVK was not too unusual, especially given the fact that, at the time, VBVK was in charge of political work being carried out in the rear of the Red Army.

Looking back at the whole of the congress, it would be no exaggeration to say that, up until then, fewer congresses of political workers had taken place which were more important than the one in Simbirsk. The congress, judging by the evidence presently available, discussed a wide range of issues relevant to the future development of the Red Army's political apparatus, both that operating at the centre and that operating directly at the front. The fact that I.N.Smirnov, who was chief of RVSR's Political department then, played a not insignificant role and made a number of positive contributions further underlines the importance of the congress to this whole topic. It is a cause for regret, however, that so little time has been

devoted to this congress by other historians, especially those working in the USSR. How much more detail about the congress still awaits the patient researcher? The latter can only be guessed at. But the overall importance of the congress certainly cannot be seriously doubted.

(ii) The activity of the Red Army's political departments
on the Southern Front(September-December 1918)

Having examined the activity of the political departments on the Eastern Front, it is now time to turn to analysing the work of the political departments on the other fronts of the Red Army's military activities, starting with the front that was formed after the creation of the Eastern Front: namely, the Southern Front. Although the latter did not come formally into being until quite late on in September 1918, it certainly was not too long before the first signs of political activity began to appear. It should be stressed, however, that the work and organisation of the political departments on the Southern Front did not mirror exactly the work of the political departments on the Eastern Front-different conditions and circumstances prevailed on each of the fronts and this had an influence on the work of each of the political

departments.

The Southern Front came in to formal existence on 11th September 1918, by order of RVSR.⁶⁵ As stated above, it was not too long before the first signs of the activities of the political departments became apparent. On the 30th September 1918, a statute was passed on "the political department of the Military soviet, Voronezh raion, Southern sector of the screens" which was very long and detailed and very precise about the work of the political department:

under the command of the political department are all the political-educational organisations, the cultural-educational commissions, clubs, libraries, schools, agitators, lecturers and, in general, all Party comrades, working in institutions and military units, subordinate to the Military soviet, Voronezh raion(southern sector).⁶⁶

According to the other details of the statute, the political department was to consist of two sub-departments: political-educational and administrative-inspection.⁶⁷ The political-educational sub-department was in charge of organising the work of the cultural-educational commissions, agitating amongst the soldiers, uniting the activity of the Party cells, etc.⁶⁸ The work of the latter sub-department was further strengthened by the work of the administrative-inspection sub-department, which was in charge of publishing the orders of the military commissar on a daily basis, registering the

command staff, inspecting the work of the commissars, etc.⁶⁹ Of course, it can only be assumed that the structure and the work of this particular political department was carried out in the way described; unfortunately, there is no detail concerning its exact functioning on the front.

Although it has not been possible to trace the exact date for the formation of the Southern Front's political department, an examination of the available evidence would appear to show that the latter was created in mid-October 1918. In a report, made by the Southern Front's political department in December 1918, the following statement is to be found:

a meeting of all the chiefs of the army political departments of the Southern Front was opened today...from the reports, it was clear what great work had been undertaken by the political department of the Southern Front during its 6-week existence.⁷⁰

Since the report was made on 3rd December 1918, then deducting 6 weeks from that particular date would certainly place the creation of the political department in the middle of October. It is also the case that D.I.Yefremov took over the post as Chief of Southern Front's political department in mid October 1918.⁷¹ The earliest mention that can be found concerning the work of the Southern Front's political department is a communication of the latter's information section, in

which is discussed the "high morale qualities of the Chinese-internationalists", then fighting on the Southern Front(November 1918).⁷² A more interesting publication of the Southern Front's political department, however, was issued a few days after the above communique and was a circular entitled, "on the organisation of agitational work in the rear of the enemy".⁷³ The circular stated that:

the political department of the Southern Front considers work in the rear...of the enemy one of the most important and urgent tasks. All measures have been taken by us to establish links with the enemy zone and to the creation there...of a number of strong points for the purposes of agitation.⁷⁴

This agitation in the enemy's rear was to be carried out by a wide variety of means:

before the creation of Party cells in the rear, agitational literature must be distributed amongst the enemy's troops. For this purpose, aeroplanes are of little use. It is necessary to create a different apparatus. In creating this apparatus, we must adopt all measures...we await your ideas on this. In the meantime, we will send a certain amount of leaflets for distribution in the enemy's rear. Take all necessary steps to ensure that the literature achieves its aim. Aeroplanes are to be used in the most urgent cases.⁷⁵

Within a few days of this circular being sent out, the chief of the political department of the 13th Rifle Division sent the following reply:

in answer to your request...concerning agitational work in the enemy's rear, we have to tell you that work in this area has virtually not been carried out, with the sole exception of the political department of the 13th division and also its instructor.⁷⁶

Thus, it would appear that the priorities of the front political department and the political departments underneath it were not necessarily one and the same thing all the time.

The first real mention of the work of the political apparatus on the Southern Front is the discussion that arose between various political departmental chiefs and VBVK, held on 3rd December 1918-the first time, as far as can be judged presently, when VBVK held direct talks with representatives of political departments, operating at the front.⁷⁷ There are a number of documents available, relating directly to the meeting, so that it is possible to build up some sort of picture as regards what, in actual fact, took place.

In a copy of a telegram sent to the Party's CC, concerning the opening of the meeting, a footnote to the latter describes the actual agenda of the meeting- apparently, the agenda was to consist of the following series of points:

reports from the localities, draft instructions on the Party cells and regulations on the political departments, organisational and Party work in the army, cultural-educational work and current events.⁷⁸

I.I.Khodorovsky, who was then head of the Southern Front's political department and the sender of the above telegram, stated in the telegram that the meeting was well attended by a number of prominent figures of the Red

Army's political establishment:

today saw the opening of the meeting of the chiefs of the political departments of all the armies on the Southern Front, with the participation of Yurenev, Smirnov, Yefremov and Khodorovsky. From the reports[at the meeting-SM] it was made clear how much good work had been undertaken by the Southern Front's political department during its 6-week existence. Through the department, one thousand one hundred Communists have been distributed over all the armies with comparative rationality, if one takes into account the feverishness of the work. For all newly arriving Communists, cycles of lectures are read, in accordance with a specific programme approximating to the needs of the front...political departments have been organised in all the armies and in the divisions. A registration of all the Red Army Communist Party cells is taking place and a general total of all the Communists on the front is being reached.⁷⁹

According to Khodorovsky's figures, in the three armies of the Southern Front-8th, 9th and 10th-there were approximately 60 Party cells, representing a total number of 1,500 Communists and 1,000 sympathisers.⁸⁰ If one bears in mind the relative youthfulness of the armies under review-8th Army was the oldest of the three, coming into being only on 26th September 1918⁸¹-then the registration of so many Party members and sympathisers was not a bad achievement. However, on saying that, there was still room for improvement: it should not be forgotten that at the same time that these figures relate to(December 1918), 3rd Army(Eastern Front)alone numbered 2,000 Party members.⁸²

Khodorovsky also mentioned the fact that the Southern Front's political department operated a number of "political investigative" inspectors, who were sent not

only to various units operating on the front, but also those closest to the battle zone.⁸³ Their main function was "to normalise and secure the rear".⁸⁴ Unfortunately, other than the latter brief mention, it is not possible to expand any further on their role.

On the question of cultural-educational work being carried out on the Southern front, Khodorovsky expressed a degree of satisfaction in this area:

the cultural-educational work of the department is demonstrated by the invitation of a whole number of lecturers, several artistic groups, mobile cinemas. The distribution of papers and literature, one can consider to be comparatively efficient.⁸⁵

The next account of the meeting is to be found in another telegram, sent by the Southern Front's political department, as regards the differences between one of the Southern Front's chief political representatives-D.Yefremov-and a number of the representatives at the meeting over Yefremov's draft instructions to the Party cells, as previously described elsewhere in this chapter.⁸⁶ However, the meeting also discussed a proposed set of regulations on the operation of the Party cells and it is to that we now turn.

The instructions were published on 3rd December 1918, ie just one day after the meeting had formally closed so there is a very strong indication that the instructions had been well-prepared in advance. The full title of the instructions reveals that they were of, arguably, a

localised nature but, nevertheless, are worthy of detailed examination as they provide an insight as to how the political departments working on the front, actually saw their own powers and functions. Thus, the title of the instructions was "instructions to the Army political departments of the Southern Front, adopted at the meeting of workers of the Southern Front and representatives of the All-Russian Bureau of Military Commissars."⁸⁷

The instructions consisted of an introduction and four main sections, each one describing the relationship and organisational structure of the political department. The introduction to the instructions stated the following:

the work of the political department is divided into three main areas:

1. Unifying the activity of the commissars of the armies in the units, directing and supervising their work.
2. Political and organisational work in the army.
3. Political work in the front-line and rear areas(organisation of political espionage and counter-espionage).⁸⁸

These three basic areas are then described, in detail, in the relevant separate sections of the instructions. For instance, as regards the relationship between the political department and the military commissar, the regulations proposed that the political departments:

1. Above all, establish and maintain a close link with all the commissars, subordinate to the department.
2. Conduct a complete registration of them and collect material, characterising the activity of the commissar.
3. Systematically inform the commissars not only about the

most important facts of the political struggle, but also about the work of the political department.

4. Direct the Party-organisational activity of the commissar, ie, leading and supervising his activity in the organisation of the regimental Party cells.
6. Closely watch the interrelationship between the commissars and the commanders, constantly thwarting attempts to interfere in operational matters. This, however, does not release the commissar from his responsibility to always be involved in operational work.⁸⁹

What this part of the instructions relate is the changing nature of the relationship between the political departments and the military commissars. Whereas before, as previously shown, in the initial development of the political apparatus on the Eastern Front, the political departments were viewed as being part of the "support" apparatus for the work of the commissars, as the power of the political departments increased, then the situation reversed itself and the commissars became the support apparatus for the work of the political departments. This part of these instructions clearly demonstrates that the balance of power in the front political apparatus had moved away from the commissars to the political departments. A point which was further shown to be the case in the week following the publication of this set of instructions, as will be detailed later.

The next main section of the instructions dealt with the organisational work of the Army political departments and covered a wide range of functions. In order to save on needless repetition, the most interesting points in

this particular section are the following:

1. Registering and distributing equally Party strength in the army.
2. Organising Party cells in the units, unifying and supervising their work.
3. Strengthening the conduct of propaganda and agitational work.
4. Establishing the systematic supply of papers and literature.
5. Organising libraries, reading rooms and clubs.⁹⁰

According to the instructions, the main reasons behind such work being undertaken were:

- a) an exact assessment of the mood of the army...
- b) raising the level of discipline amongst the troops...
- c) a merciless purge from the army of all irresponsible agitators, especially those who are destroying the army by conducting agitational work against the military leader-specialists.⁹¹

In general, the three main tasks of the political departments here described could easily be applied to the work of any of the other Red Army political departments. After all, in assessing the mood of the army and raising its overall levels of discipline were two of the key functions of political departments on all the other fronts that the Red Army was fighting on, as well.

The final sections of the instructions detail the work of the political department, both in the front-line zone and in the enemy's rear. As regards the functions of the political department in the front-line zone, the political departments were instructed to:

1. Normalise the attitude of the army to the people.
2. Maintain the army's links with the local Party and workers' organisations, also with all the soviet political organisations, so as to ensure that the army is not split from the working masses.
4. Study in detail the socio-economic and political groupings of the population, with the aim of finding out on which groups one may rely on and which may be used by the enemy.⁹²

Arguably, the most interesting of the points listed above is the last one, as it begs a number of further questions, like what were the criteria in judging which groups could be relied upon and which could not? How often were these studies supposed to be carried out? How were these studies exactly acted upon? Unfortunately, without access to any of these studies, it is even impossible to say whether they were, in actual fact, carried out in the first place.

As regards working in the enemy's rear, then the Army political departments were, for obvious reasons, fairly restricted in what could be undertaken. However, even so, they were still expected to:

1. Organise political intelligence.
2. Distribute literature in the rear of the enemy.
3. Create Party organs in the area of the opposition forces.
4. Organise cells of insurrection.⁹³

It was also in this particular section of the instructions that the political departments were told "to punish every dereliction of duty on the part of the commissar."⁹⁴ The latter was, once again, further evidence of the way that

the role of the two parts of the political apparatus had changed-now, the political departments could, if needs be, punish the military commissars.

In assessing the importance of the meeting, something which, as yet, can only be done partially, one must remember that amongst those who are identified as taking part are prominent figures of the Red Army's political establishment, eg Yurenev, Smirnov, Khodorovsky, etc, and, furthermore, it surely was no coincidence that, within a couple of days of the closure of the meeting, as will be detailed below, RVSR issued an order on the formal recognition of the political departments? Mind you, it should be remembered in this particular context that both Yurenev and Smirnov were themselves members of RVSR.⁹⁵ It was also the case that less than 10 days after the closure of the meeting, VBVK also passed an order, increasing the status of the political departments, as regards the conduct of cultural-educational work at the front.⁹⁶ Thus, given what was discussed at the meeting, the prominence of the personalities who took part and the changes in the political apparatus, immediately following the December 1918 meeting, it certainly would appear to be the case that what took place was of an importance that stretched far beyond the physical confines of the Southern Front.

(iii) Formal recognition of the Party-political status of
the political departments(December 1918)

In attempting to arrive at an explanation as to why both the CC and RVSR took so long before granting the political departments the necessary legal recognition, one Soviet historian, V.G.Kolychev, who has written widely on the Red Army's political apparatus during the Civil War, has postulated the following reasons-firstly, that the political departments themselves were simply not ready to take on the full responsibilities of being the Party's leading organs in the Red Army and, secondly, before December 1918, there were simply not enough of them to warrant such responsibility.⁹⁷ Again, it is difficult to debate the actual content of this argument-after all, there are no figures on the exact number of political departments in the Red Army at this time and, as shown above, as they began to be created, they were simply not the Party organs in the Red Army. The latter was a role that they eventually evolved into, so to speak. But, despite the lack of the necessary detailed information, it is still odd that it was well into the actual history of the Red Army's political departments, before they received their formal recognition.

Leaving that argument aside, the actual order which did

grant them the necessary legal recognition was issued by RVSR, note not VBVK, on 5th December 1918 and was entitled "on the political departments of the Revolutionary Military Soviets of the Fronts and Armies".⁹⁸ Since the order was fairly short, as well as being an important historical document, it is translated below in full:

1. For the conduct of political(Party)and cultural-educational work both in the Red Army field forces and amongst the population at the front, political departments have been created by the Revolutionary Military Soviets of the armies and fronts, being themselves organs of the Revolutionary Military Soviets.

Notes:1. The chief of a political department, if he is not a member of the Revolutionary Military Soviet, joins the latter with a consultative vote.

2. The political departments are financed by the corresponding Revolutionary Military Soviets.

11.The political departments of the fronts direct the work of the political departments of the armies. The direction of all the political work of the front and rear, equally the distribution of Party strength, mobilised for work in the Red Army, belongs to the All-Russian Bureau of Military Commissars, working in the closest contact with and according to the directives⁹⁹ of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party.

The order was signed by both Trotsky and Yurenev in their capacities as Chairman and member of RVSR respectively.¹⁰⁰

In a number of respects, the order lacks a certain degree of clarity in its statement of the role of VBVK and its assertion that VBVK was working in close contact with the directives of the Party's CC. Given what has so far been written about the work and organisation of the political departments, it has to be said that there would appear to have been very little real contact between VBVK and the front political departments. They operated fairly

independently of VBVK, if not totally independently of VBVK. Therefore, the assertion that VBVK was in charge of the overall direction of the political work being conducted on the front somehow rings hollow. In some ways, this is further borne out by the statement concerning VBVK's relationship with the CC. Certainly, for an organ that perhaps did not enjoy a great degree of popularity amongst hardened Bolsheviki Party members, any identification with the Party's supreme decision-making organ would have helped it to increase both its overall authority and prestige among the members of the political departments. In other words, it could have been the case that the order was an attempt to paper over a number of cracks that had appeared throughout the year, concerning the relationship between VBVK and the front political departments.

A week after the issue of the RVSR order, VBVK itself published an order on the cultural-educational work in the front units, in which VBVK pronounced on the role of the political departments, amongst other things.¹⁰¹ In the relevant section of the order, the latter stated that:

the leading centre for the establishment and direction of cultural-educational work in the entire Red Army is the agitation-education department of the All-Russian Bureau of Military Commissars; the closest leading organ for the troops, located on the front, is the political department attached to the staff of the army.¹⁰²

Thus, within the space of less than 10 days after the

meeting on the Southern Front, the political departments had been acknowledged as being the Party's leading organs in the Red Army and, at front level, the most important organs in the conduct of cultural-educational work in the Red Army. These were important indications in the real shift of power to the political apparatus, operating at the front. Neither of these measures can be viewed as having weakened the position of the political departments in the conduct of political and cultural-educational work on the front; on the contrary, they formally recognised a position that had been the case for some time previous. There were still problems ahead for the political departments, but within the space of less than 10 days, their fortunes had turned and their position strengthened.

The activity continued apace with the publication of an order, on 25th December 1918, on the creation of divisional political departments.¹⁰³ Needless to say, the order was issued by RVSR, not VBVK, and, again, would seem to confirm that RVSR played a more prominent role in the affairs of the political departments than VBVK. Eventually, RVSR also got round to issue orders on the figures of staffs for the front and army political departments, but that was not to occur until February 1919¹⁰⁴ and, before moving on to discuss the latter, it is now time to examine the formation and work of the other political departments, operating on the other fronts, at

his time.

(iv) Political department activity elsewhere in the Red
Army units(September 1918-February 1919)

Political work on the Northern and Western fronts was basically conducted along similar lines, given the interchangeability of the two fronts. The Northern front was created on 11th September 1918 and was made up of the troops of the Northern and North-West sectors of the "screens", troops of the Petrograd raion and, finally, 6th and 7th Armies.¹⁰⁵ Later on, however, the Northern Front was eventually liquidated(February 1919)and the subsequent men and materials used to make up the Western Front.¹⁰⁶ Thus, as long as it is remembered that the Northern Front was eventually to become the Western Front, then there should be little room for confusion.

The first steps towards the creation of an Army political department on the Northern Front were taken on 24th September 1918, when 6th Army decided to create an Organisation-mobilisation department, attached to the Army's staff H.Q.¹⁰⁷ According to the published statute, the Organisation-mobilisation department was to consist of three sections-organisation, agitation and

mobilisation.¹⁰⁸ One of the then sectional heads-V.I.Suzdaltseva-Tagunova-wrote, some 18 years after the event and during the beginning of the Stalinist show trials, the following brief reference to the origins of the department:

for the conduct of all the work, the Organisation-mobilisation department was created. In it were comrades Shcherbakov, Metelyev and Suzdaltseva. In essence, the Orgmob had to become and subsequently became the political department of the front.¹⁰⁹

It has to be said that, however brief the statement is, it does raise one contentious point, namely, the assertion that the Orgmob became the effective political department for the front. Whilst it is true that the Orgmob did become the political department for 6th Army¹¹⁰, it should also be borne in mind that 7th Army also had an effective political department working at the time, therefore Suzdaltseva's assertion that 6th Army's political department became the political department for the whole of the front may well have had something to do with historical events closer to 1936 than 1918.

As regards the work carried out by the 6th Army's political department, Suzdaltseva did state that it "covered a wide range of responsibilities"-

the terms of reference for the Orgmob were many and very different. It was not only political work in the military units, but also establishing a close link with soviet organs in the frontal raions, the publication of leaflets for the army and population, organising the rear, calculating the mood of the masses, mobilising the

bourgeoisie for trench work.¹¹²

A further indication of the work carried out by the Orgmob is the statement that between September-November 1918, in the regions where 6th Army was placed, 149 Communist Party cells and 5,839 committees of the poor were created in the localities.¹¹³ The strength of the 6th Army's political department, on the face of evidence presently available, would appear to have been moderate: Kolychev quotes a figure for February 1919 of only 800 Party members in 6th Army.¹¹⁴

In a report on the work of the political department of 7th Army, the history and membership of the latter is given in a very matter-of-fact way:

the organisation of the political department began on 28th November 1918, by members of the Revolutionary Military Soviet of 7th Army[at that time, the RMS of 7th Army consisted of E.M.Golubintsev(commander), M.I.Kozen, S.A.Natsarepus, I.A.Tomashevich and, finally, S.P.Voskov ¹¹⁵]. Officials of the department were elected...from a number of mobilised Communists. The overall total of workers in the department is 10-15 people, including agitators.¹¹⁶

The relevant report of 7th Army's political department's activity covers the period of the latter's work between 28th November 1918-16th December 1918 and is composed of three main sections, each one outlining one of the main areas of work of the political department.¹¹⁷ Thus, judging by each of the sections, it would appear that the political department was engaged in registering Communists

in the units; sending out personnel to the various towns in the area(although for what exact purpose is impossible to say) and, finally, helping to support the activity of a theatre group, operating on the front at that time.¹¹⁸ All in all, it would have to be said that it would appear that 7th Army's political department initially started off rather slowly, picking up from the middle of 1919 onwards, as, no doubt, the influx of new political personnel and better access to materials allowed the political department to carry out its duties. Before leaving this analysis of the work of the political departments on the Northern Front, contrary to the assertion made by Suzdaltseva, indeed there was a proper functioning Front political department on the Northern Front and it is only fair that it should be examined here.

The Northern Front's political department was created in January 1919-according to available evidence, no earlier than 10th January 1919.¹¹⁹ The chief of the Northern Front's political department was N.K.Goncharov, an experienced Bolshevik Party member, who had joined the Party way back in 1904.¹²⁰ Although there are very few documents which actually tell us anything about the work of this particular Front political department, the ones that do exist paint a very interesting picture of a Front political department, faced with a tremendous amount of problems. For instance, on 29th January 1919, Goncharov

sent a telegram to both the CC and VBVK, concerning the lack of "responsible workers" being sent to the front:

not one responsible worker has been sent. We cannot advance from this dead start. This applies equally to both agitational-organisational and cultural-educational work.¹²¹

Goncharov then followed up this telegram, by sending in a report on the work of the Northern Front's political department and, compared to the previous front political departmental reports, his was fairly black and pessimistic:

already a whole month has passed since the department began to function. However, at the present moment in time, this has been a very long period. There have been no appreciable results. The position is such that not only can one not expect any favourable results soon, but that given existing working conditions...there is no basis for hoping that even in the future...will the desired success manifest itself.¹²²

The reasons for such a pessimistic forecast become more apparent further on in the report; meanwhile, Goncharov listed what he considered to be the main tasks of a political department at front-level:

the tasks which a front department must carry out consist largely and almost exclusively of the following-directing the work of the Army political department and commissars; inspecting and studying their work; on the basis of the latter, correcting a number of measures; working out plans for the conduct of political campaigns...cultural-educational work; formulating instructions for the political departments, commissars, agitators, instructors; establishing a system of accounting and statistics; preparing specialist cadres for each area of work, allotting to them various tasks, organising organs to ensure that the tasks are carried out and providing them

with everything necessary to carry out their duties.¹²³

The latter was a fairly comprehensive summary of the tasks of a front political department; the question that Goncharov now posed was what if a front political department was not equal to the tasks?:

if the front political department is not in a position to carry out even part of these duties, then it becomes an organ of local work, equal and soon even lower than the Army political departments subordinate to it, becoming completely irrelevant...even harmful...like a brake.¹²⁴

Goncharov's explanation as to why the Northern Front's political department was in such a bad position was, in part, due to the lack of experienced workers:

the political department of the Northern Front completely lacks knowledgeable, experienced workers for cultural-educational work; it also does not have authoritative, independent, responsible workers for agitational-organisational work; on top of that, it also lacks the following, necessary for the productive work of the political department-no press, no store, no simple reserve of literature, no trained workers, no money, the lack of which makes cultural-educational work unthinkable... Consequently, it cannot, absolutely cannot assist the Army political departments subordinated to it.¹²⁵

Goncharov then proposed one of two solutions to the obvious difficulties that the Northern Front's political department found itself in:

1. Order that to the political department of the Northern Front be sent:a)two propaganda workers, who have been in the Party a long time and who also have great organisational experience(one could alter this to four comrades:two lecturers and two organisers), b)two trained and practically experienced workers in the cultural-educational sphere(educational-library and theatrical-

club), c)one specialist in general book-keeping..d)an energetic and experienced secretary, e)an artist-decorator, f)a librarian, g)an experienced director and h)an experienced teacher; on top of all this, to send literature to equip 200 complete libraries for the squad and regimental Party cells.
2. Allow me to liquidate the political department of the Northern Front, dividing its workers between 6th and 7th Armies.¹²⁶

According to available evidence, this would appear to have been the first recorded instance when the chief of a front political department asked the CC to allow him to abolish his own political department. Other than that, it is also the case that in seeking the CC's permission for such a drastic step, he felt inclined to write to the CC and not to VBVK, once again, demonstrating that for many old Bolshevik Party members, working in the Red Army's political apparatus at the front, they felt much easier in writing to the CC on issues, rather than VBVK. This, to say the least, must have made the conduct of work at the front, from the point of view of VBVK, very, very difficult indeed. In this particular instance, a decision was reached, of sorts, when the Northern Front itself was abolished and the Western Front took its place on 19th February 1919.¹²⁷ For his part, Goncharov would appear to have been moved to the somewhat less demanding task of becoming the political commissar for the 26th Rifle Division, a post that he held onto until well into October 1919.¹²⁸

(v) VBVK's attempt to establish direct contact with the
Front-line political departments (January 1919)

As already shown above, one of the main defects in the work of VBVK, in its relationship to the political apparatus at the front, was that it simply did not seem to have too much contact with the Front or Army political departments. If VBVK was going to have any chance in asserting some sort of control over the front political apparatus, then it would have to insure that it was much better informed of what was happening on the front and, more importantly, attempt to impose some sort of control over the Red Army's front political apparatus. It would appear that such an attempt was made in January 1919, as will now be detailed.

In January 1919, Yurenev proposed holding a meeting of all the front political departmental chiefs and, although needless to say, it was an excellent idea, it would appear that the organisation of such a meeting left a lot to be desired.¹²⁹ Yurenev proposed holding the meeting over a three-day period, opening the meeting on 19th January and, yet, he only sent out the necessary telegrams informing all the political departmental chiefs on 18th January 1919!¹³⁰ To say the least, this would seem to cast a shadow of doubt, as regards the seriousness of Yurenev to

try and sort out the nature of the relationship between the front political departments and VBVK. The fact that the telegrams were sent out so late-indeed, there is at least one recorded case where the relevant political department did not receive their invitation until after the closure of the congress!¹³¹ That as it may be, referring back to Yurenev's original telegram it was, in many ways, fairly brief and to the point:

on 19th January at 10 o'clock in the morning, in the building of the All-Russian Bureau of Military Commissars, will take place a meeting of the chiefs of the political departments of all the fronts. The agenda of the meeting will be: 1)reports from the localities; 2)Party work; 3)planning the registration and redistribution of Communists; 4)supplying the fronts with literature; 5)cultural-educational work; 6)organisational problems; 7)current matters. We request that you bring with you relevant materials.¹³²

In effect, Yurenev did not give anyone really enough time to properly prepare for such a meeting, especially given such a lengthy and detailed agenda. If only to further underscore the latter point, one Soviet historian, in a very rare reference to the meeting, has stated that the question on "organisational problems" was further subdivided into the following sections:

a)the inter-relationship of the Front political departments and VBVK; b)the inter-relationship of the Front political departments and the Army political departments; c)the inter-relationship of the political departments and the political commissariats; d)finance; e)the headquarters of the political departments and their functions.¹³³

Again, thanks to Petrov's account of the meeting, we also have some idea of a number of the delegates, who actually attended the meeting. Thus, the meeting was chaired by Sverdlov, representing the Party's CC; also present were G.I.Okulova, then chief of the Eastern Front's political department, then A.I.Pisarev, chief of the political department of the Western Army(later, front), A.S. Savelev, chief of the political department of 1st Army and, in Petrov's own words, "and others".¹³⁴ It is unfortunate that Petrov did not list the other members of the meeting but, nevertheless, he does provide some sort of insight as to who actually did attend the meeting. Judging by the latter, it certainly would appear to have gone some way in trying to get the views of the chiefs of the front political apparatus. According to Konovalov's previously quoted article, there was a representative from 6th Army-possibly Suzdaltseva?-although he does not actually state who it was.¹³⁵ Although the list is incomplete, it is odd that Petrov did not list anyone representing the political apparatus on the Southern Front. Of course, it could well have been the case that no one is listed, simply because the telegram arrived too late for anyone from the south to make the journey. Certainly, the Southern Front's political apparatus should have been represented, given its overall importance and size.

Unfortunately, the meeting has been largely ignored by Soviet historians in the past and, other than the details described above, there is very little else that can be added. Petrov only made one other reference to the meeting, when he described part of the outcome of the meeting:

the participants of the meeting adopted the suggestion that the appointment of chiefs of the political departments proceed from the Central Committee. The staffs of the political departments of the front, army and especially the divisional political departments were significantly broadened and made more precise.¹³⁶

The latter comment would appear to be a possible reference to the order of RVSR, published on 4th February 1919, on the figures for the staffs of the Front and Army political departments.¹³⁷ According to the latter order, the Front and Army political departments were to consist of a series of sub-departments and sections. Thus, the Front and Army political departments were to be made up of the following sub-departments: chancellery, agitation-organisation, cultural-educational, registration-distribution and, finally, information.¹³⁸ On top of the latter, the following sections were also to be added: literary-publications, theatrical-club and, finally, a school.¹³⁹ According to one author, quoting the full original order itself, the actual staff number of the Front political department was 160, the corresponding figure for the Army political department was 114.¹⁴⁰

Needless to say, the structure of the divisional political departments was less complicated and, therefore, required less staff. The divisional political departments were to consist of three Party organisers, three lecturers, a number of agitators corresponding to the number of regiments in the division, etc.¹⁴¹ The total number of staff for the divisional political department was fixed at 24.¹⁴² Thus, it would appear a strong possibility that the meeting held in January 1919 may well have ~~played~~ an important role in the eventual appearance of this particular order on the sizes and organisational structures of the various political departments. However, other than that possibility, it is regrettable that so little information is available on this particular meeting. Much more needs to be written on this particular meeting, before it can be evaluated properly.

(vi) Future conduct of political work in the Red Army and the Red Army's political departments (January-March 1919)

Political work in the Red Army carried on apace throughout January-March 1919 and the role of the political department in the conduct of the political work was still a source of debate. In an article which

appeared in the journal of the Revolutionary Military Soviet of the Eastern Front-"Voennaya Mysl"-the then chief of the political department of the Eastern Front, G.Okulova, listed ten reasons for the necessary existence of political departments.¹⁴⁴ Since the list is of primary importance to this work and has never before been published in a Western publication, it is reproduced below in full:

for the successful conduct of the Civil War, all other things being equal, it is necessary:

- 1)that the army be conscious, that each Red Army soldier knows what he is fighting for;
- 2)it is necessary that our army works amongst the people and is well-disposed towards them. Only by working in a benevolent atmosphere can all the forces of the army be exclusively turned against the enemy;
- 3)as much as possible, it is necessary to introduce consciousness in the ranks of the enemy...and by this introduce demoralisation in his army;
- 4)one of the most serious obstacles in spreading education in our army is mass illiteracy. It is necessary to fight against this evil by the most energetic means possible;
- 5)it is necessary to fill the leisure time of the soldiers by healthy pursuits;
- 6)it is necessary to brighten up the life of the soldiers;
- 7)there should exist an institution, which carefully observes the mood of the army, examining the reasons for unfavourable attitudes and attempt to eradicate the latter;
- 8)it is necessary that the broadest sections of the population of the RSFSR are informed about the life of the army. It is necessary that the workers and peasants feel that the army is their own creation;
- 9)it is necessary that such an institution exist, operating like an all-seeing eye, watching over the work of all the institutions in the army, enjoying the unlimited trust of the soldiers and whose word carries undoubted authority;
- 10)from the actual character of the tasks listed above, it should be stressed that that exclusively almost only Communists can fulfil them, thereby signifying that there should also be an institution which is concerned with the distribution of Communist Party strength in all the armies and units.

The organ fulfilling all these tasks is the political department of the Front, Army and division.¹⁴⁵

As can be shown from the above, it would appear that the political department had to attach great significance to the training of the peasant soldier into becoming a conscientious fighter for the Russian Republic. Given that Okulova was a chief of an active front political department, this list probably represented what she considered to be the real essence of the activity of the political departments, working at the front. There would not be too much room in her list for academic or merely scholastic schemes-even in attempting to demoralise the enemy soldiers, the latter was not viewed as mere bravado, but a determined attempt to woo the enemy soldiers away from their counter-revolutionary officers and, thereby, reduce the military effectiveness of the forces that faced the Red Army.

Okulova also had a number of things to say about the nature of the relationship between VBVK and the front political apparatus:

at the present time, the practical approach of the Army political departments and a number of the divisions is to send directly to the centre their various requests (for literature, people, cinematic apparatus, theatrical groups, etc) and the fulfilment of these requests, by the centre, without the involvement of the front political departments. This confuses the work of the latter, as it removes the possibility of establishing a proper distribution of men and materials and working according to a specific plan.

On top of this, in entering into separate agreements with local political departments, the centre takes on a very heavy burden and, because of this, distributes all

terials completely accidentally. A position is being created that all the help is being received, not by the weaker political departments which especially need it, but by those departments which are more enterprising and succeed in receiving everything, both from the centre and the Front political department.¹⁴⁶

Without access to a number of primary source materials, it is difficult to say exactly what Okulova could have been referring to, as regards her remarks about separate agreements being struck. Certainly, it was a point that she came back to with even more force later on in her article:

strict centralisation of work is necessary. A categorical ban on all separate discussions is also necessary. Discussions should be carried out according to the following chain of command: divisional political departments->Army political department->Front political department->All-Russian Bureau of Military Commissars and conversely. And only this way. Any other way and we will still...be in the chaos that we find ourselves in.¹⁴⁷

Thus, judging by Okulova's article, it would appear that there were reasonable grounds for complaint about VBVK's work, emanating from the point of view of the front political departments. If VBVK was making separate agreements with a number of political departments, without previously consulting the necessary front political department, then a confused situation, to say the least, could quite easily have arisen. It would also seem to be the case that the most successful political departments were those which, through a variety of measures, were able to work the system, ie gain all the required men and

materials through holding separate talks with both VBVK and the relevant front political department. This could well be a partial explanation as to why, for instance, the Northern Front's political department found itself in such a bad position--an inability to get the necessary attention from VBVK. Again, though, this has to remain purely speculative, but there would appear to be some evidence to support such a view.

By the beginning of 1919, the emphasis in the conduct of political work in the Red Army began to change. This was exemplified in the decision, taken by the Southern Front's political department, that political work should be carried out more by the divisional political departments than the Army and Front political departments.¹⁴⁸ The basis for such a shift was, judging by the original order, eminently logical:

assume, as a basis, the division, representing the natural, vital and, more or less, constant link of the various military units. The divisional political department, maintaining an uninterrupted link with the regiments and always informed of all the details of each separate part is in a much better position to carry out the direct leadership of political work in the units. The work of the divisional political departments is even more important, located, as they are, very often in villages...because, under the necessity of the situation, they are ideally placed to carry out work amongst the peasants in the front-line zone, good or bad.¹⁴⁹

In effect, what happened on the Southern Front was to be mirrored elsewhere and was to receive official support, so to speak, at the 8th Party Congress in March 1919, when

the Party's CC decided that the future emphasis on the conduct of political work in the Red Army should be transferred away from the Army and Front political departments and onto the divisional political departments- however, more on that in the next chapter. Suffice it to say, presently, that, once again, the front political apparatus was moving ahead and developing its own answers to its own problems, largely independently of what was being said or done at the centre.

As shown earlier, the political departments came in to being largely through a mixture of local initiative and centralised help(in the shape of the Supreme Military Inspectorate, not VBVK) and, in the early stages, they were simply designed to help the Revolutionary Military Councils. However, as the situation on the front changed and the demands for more effective political control of the units grew, then the functions and overall role of the political departments also changed until, by December 1918, they were officially recognised as the Party's leading organs in the Red Army. Needless to say, the actual structure of the political departments did not remain a fixed one and nor could it, with its changing position and increasing list of functions and duties to perform. They held a number of important meetings- especially on the Eastern and Southern Fronts-and from these meetings, it would be logical to infer that a number

of significant changes were adopted by the central political and military organs, which were a direct consequence of the Front political departmental meetings. However, despite all this activity, the relationship with VBVK would appear to have been, at best, weak, and, at worse, non-existent. There were a number of reasons for this, not least of which was the independence of the front-line political apparatus from the centre, as well as the relative weakness of the centre, in its attempt to impose some sort of control over the work and the organs, operating at the front. VBVK was not alone to blame for the poor organisational links with the political apparatus at the front, but it is difficult to understand when, for instance as happened in January 1919, VBVK called a crucial meeting of the chiefs of all the Front political departments, why it allowed them so little time to make the journey, never mind, prepare for the meeting.

VBVK's final demise was to occur at the 8th Party Congress but, in all honesty, had occurred much earlier than that, at the front. It never assumed the leading position that was necessary for the control of the political apparatus at the front and, although it was not to entirely blame for its own failings, nevertheless it has to assume a good portion of the blame. Its final demise, however, will be discussed in the final section to this particular chapter.

NOTES(1):-

1. Feodotoff White, "The growth of the Red Army", Princeton, 1947, p.76.

2. A. Geronimus, "Osnovnye momenty razvitiya partiino-politicheskogo apparata Krasnoi Armii v 1918-1921 gg." "Grazhdanskaya voina, 1918-1921." Vol.2, M.1928, p.112.

3. "Politorgany Sovetskikh Vooruzhenykh Silakh." M.1984, p.32.

4. E.F. Krivosheenkova, "Sozdanie i deyatelnost politorganov armiy Vostochnogo fronta s interventami i belogvardeytsami (1918-1919 gg)." Avtoreferat, M.1972, p.10.

5. V.G. Kolychhev, "Partiino-politicheskaya rabota v Krasnoi Armii v gody grazhdanskoi voyny. 1918-1920." M.1979, p.108.

6. V.M. Portnov and M.M. Slavin, "Pravovye osnovy stroitelstva Krasnoi Armii. 1918-1920 gg." M.1985, p.170.

7. "Voennaya Mysl" (journal of the Revolutionary Military Soviet of the Eastern Front), no.1, February 1919, pp.21-22.

8. Ibid, no.1, p.22.

9. Ibid, no.1 p.22

10. Ibid, no.1, p.22.

11. Ibid.

12. V.G. Kolychhev, "Partiino-politicheskaya rabota...", M.1979, p.109.

13. "Politorgany Sovetskikh...", M.1984, p.32.

14. Geronimus, ibid, M.1928, p.115.

15. It should be remembered that, according to a number of sources, Muraviev joined the White forces on 10th/11th July 1918 (Chamberlain, vol.2, p.529; Footman, "Civil War in Russia", p.99).

16. "Politorgany Sovetskikh...", M.1984, p.32.

NOTES(2):-

17.V.G.Kolychev, "Partiino-politicheskaya rabota...", M.1979, p.109.

18.S.S.Khromov, "Grazhdanskaya voina i voennaya interventsia v SSSR. Entsiklopediya." 1st edition, M.1983, p.495.

19."Direktivy komandovaniya frontov Krasnoi Armii(1917-1922). Sbornik dokumentov v 4-kh tomakh." Vol.4, M.1978,p.529.

20.Ibid., vol.4, p.533.

21."Perepiska Sekretariata TsK RKP(B) s mestnymi partiinymi organizatsiyami(noyabr-dekabr 1918 g.)." Vol.5, M.1970, p.355.

22."Godovshchina pervoi revoliutsionnoi armii." M.1920, p.33.

23."Perepiska Sekretariata TsK...", vol.5, M.1970, p.354-355.

24.Ibid., p.355.

25.Ibid.

26.Ibid, p.357.

27.Ibid.

28.Ibid,

29.Ibid.

30.Ibid.

31."Godovshchina pervoi revoliutsionnoi ...", p.30.

32.Ibid.

33.G.Lindov, "O politicheskoi rabote i politicheskikh rabotnikakh na fronte." Kharkov, 1919.

34.Lindov, ibid, p.23.

35.Ibid.

36.Ibid,, p.22.

NOTES(3):-

37. Lindov, ibid., p.22.

38."Partiino-politicheskaya rabota v Krasnoi Armii(aprel 1918-fevral 1919). Dokumenty." Vol.1, M.1961, p.185.

39.Ibid., pp.186-7

40.Ibid., p.186.

41."Godovshchina pervoi revoliutsionnoi...", p.35.

42.A.P.Nenarokov, "Vostochniy front." M.1969, p.172.

43.Ibid.

44."Politorgany Sovetskikh Vooruzhenykh...", p.45;
Nenarokov, ibid. p.172.

45.Nenarokov, ibid. p.164.

46."Izvestiya Narodnogo Komissariata po Voennym Delam,"
16.10.18

47.Nenarokov, ibid. p.164.

48.Ibid.

49.Ibid.

50.Ibid.

51.Ibid.

52."Partiino-politicheskaya rabota...", p.89.

53.Nenarokov, ibid., p.165.

54.Ibid.

55.Ibid.

56.Ibid., p.168.

57.Ibid.

58.Ibid., p.170.

59.Ibid.

NOTES(4):-

60.Nenarokov, ibid., p.172.

61.Ibid.

62.Ibid.

63."Partiino-politicheskaya rabota...", p.195.

64.Ibid.

65.Khromov, ibid., p.677

66."Partiino-politicheskaya rabota...", p.238.

67.Ibid.

68.Ibid.

69.Ibid., p.239.

70.Ibid., p.247.

71.Ibid., p.344.

72.Ibid., p.240.

73.Ibid., pp.240-1.

74.Ibid.

75.Ibid., p.241.

76.Ibid.

77.Ibid., p.244.

78."Perepiska Sekretariata TsK...", p.360.

79.Ibid., pp.359-60.

80.Ibid., p.360.

81.Ibid.

82.Ibid., p.357.

83.Ibid., p.360.

84.Ibid.

NOTES(5):-

85. "Perepiska Sekretariata TsK...", p.360
86. See the relevant section on Party cells, pp.??
87. "Partiino-politicheskaya rabota...", pp.244-46.
88. Ibid., p.244.
89. Ibid., pp.244-45.
90. Ibid., p.245.
91. Ibid.
92. Ibid.
93. Ibid., p.246.
94. Ibid.
95. Khromov, "Grazhdanskaya voina...", 1st ed. p.495.
96. "Polozheniya i instruktsii po postanovke politicheskoprosvetitelnoi raboty v Krasnoi Armii." M.1919, p.48.
97. Kolychev, "Partiino-politicheskaya rabota...", M.1979, p.111.
98. "Izvestiya Narodnogo Komissariata po Voennym Delam". 5.12.18.
99. Ibid., 5.12.18.
100. Ibid.
101. "Polozheniya i instruktsii...", M.1919, p.48.
102. Ibid.
103. Khromov, "Grazhdanskaya voina...", 1st ed., p.464.
104. "Partiino-politicheskaya rabota...", vol.1, p.344.
105. Ibid.
106. Khromov, "Grazhdanskaya voina...", 1st ed., p.526.
107. "Partiino-politicheskaya rabota...", vol.1, p.308.

NOTES(6):-

108."Partiino-politicheskaya rabota...", vol.1, p.308.

109.V.I.Suzdaltseva, "Partiinaya rabota na Severnom fronte. 1918-1919 gg." Arkhangelsk, 1936, p.34.

110."Partiino-politicheskaya rabota...", vol.1, p.309.

111.Ibid.

112.Suzdaltseva. "Partiynaya rabota...", p.134.

113.V.Konovalov, "Sozдание politorganov i partorganizatsiy v 6-oi armii i ikh deyatelnost v 1918-1920gg." ('Voennno-istoricheskii zhurnal', M.1977, pt.6, p.79).

114.Kolychev, "Partiino-politicheskaya rabota...", M.1979, p.104.

115.Khromov, "Grazhdanskaya voina...", 1st ed., p.530.

116."Partiino-politicheskaya rabota...", vol.1, p.319.

117.Ibid., pp.319-320.

118.Ibid.

119.The first document that can be found concerning the activity of the Northern Front's political department dates from the 10th January 1919.(See "Perepiska Sekretariata...", vol.6, M.1971, p.453).

120.Khromov, "Grazhdanskaya voina...", 1st ed. p.153.

121."Perepiska Sekretariata TsK...", vol.6, p.474.

122."Partiino-politicheskaya rabota...", vol.1, p.328.

123.Ibid., p.329.

124.Ibid.

125.Ibid.

126.Ibid. p.330.

127.Khromov, "Grazhdanskaya voina...", 1st ed. p.527.

128.Ibid., p.153.

NOTES(7):-

129. "Perepiska Sekretariata TsK...", vol.6, p.460.
130. Ibid.
131. Ibid.
132. Ibid.
133. Yu.P.Petrov, "KPSS-rukovoditel i vospitatel Krasnoi Armii(1918-1920 gg)." M.1961, p.152.
134. Petrov, "KPSS-rukovoditel...", p.152.
135. Konovalov, "Sozdanie politorganov...", p.77.
136. Petrov, "KPSS-rukovoditel...", p.153.
137. "Partiino-politicheskaya rabota...", vol.1, p.344.
138. Ibid.
139. Ibid.
140. I.Ignatyev, "Istoriya partpolitapparata Vooruzhenykh Sil Soiuza SSR. Kratkiy ocherk." M.1947, p.19.
141. Khromov, "Grazhdanskaya voyna...", 1st ed. p.464.
142. Ignatyev, "Istoriya partpolitapparata...", p.19.
143. "Partiino-politicheskaya rabota...", vol.1, p.226.
144. "Voennaya Mysl", February 1919, p.10.
145. Ibid.
146. Ibid., p.17.
147. Ibid.
148. "Partiino-politicheskaya rabota...", vol.1, p.278.
149. Ibid.

CHAPTER TWO(SECTION FIVE):-

VBVK AND THE EIGHTH PARTY CONGRESS-THE FINAL CHAPTER IN
THE ACTIVITY OF VBVK(MARCH-APRIL 1919).

In a number of respects, the reader might be forgiven if he thought that such a closing section was a bit of a waste of time in writing, given the fact that VBVK had, for such a long time, proven itself not to be doing the job that it was intended to do, that its eventual replacement by another centralised political organ for the Red Army was a bit of a foregone conclusion. In actual fact, an examination of the historical record would appear to paint a somewhat different picture-while the reorganisation of VBVK was definitely on the cards, as will be described below, in some respects, the total replacement of the organ did come as a bit of a surprise. There was obviously every indication that VBVK had to be reorganised and made into a more effective organ, but its total replacement by PUR was not an automatic certainty. This section, then, will examine the performance, so to speak, of VBVK at the 8th Party Congress and analyse the changes made by the latter on the Red Army's political apparatus. Obviously, such a discussion will also involve a retrospective look back at VBVK itself and assess its

overall importance to the development of the Red Army's political apparatus and the reasons for its eventual downfall. Unfortunately, one thing that should be taken into account, right from the outset, is the fact that VBVK has been a victim, for a period at least, of the Stalinist historiography of the history of the USSR, therefore, in evaluating a number of sources, this will be apparent and the necessary caution exercised.

A modern interpretation of the events of the 8th Party Congress and the decision to abolish VBVK states the following:

the VIII Congress of the RCP(B) produced a positive assessment of the work of the All-Russian Bureau of Military Commissars...Alongwith this, however, it was noted at the Congress that the Bureau, overburdened with the responsibility of directing the activities of the various activities of the military commissars-from the main and central establishments and institutions of the military department to the regiments and special units, their appointment, placement and dismissal, the organisation of military-political counter-espionage and other matters, the Bureau was not in a position to devote sufficient attention to Party, political and cultural-educational work amongst the troops. Besides the latter, in all the military units, Party organisations had arisen which needed unified leadership. The existing All-Russian Bureau of Military Commissars did not possess Party functions.

In connection with this, the VIII Congress of the Party took the decision to eliminate the All-Russian Bureau of Military Commissars and create the Political department of Revvoensovet of the Republic.¹

Before moving on from this particular quote, there are a number of points contained in this quote worth further examination. First of all, the quote states that the Congress did produce a positive assessment of the work of

VBVK and yet, curiously enough, as will be shown below, one cannot find any evidence for such a positive assessment judging by what has been made available of the minutes of the Congress. Secondly, in the list of the duties that VBVK had to perform in the proper functioning of the tasks of the military commissars, there seems to be a veiled reference to the demand of the political departments(the mysterious "Party organisations" in the quote)for a more rigorous centralised leadership emanating from the centre and, finally, the admission that VBVK did not possess Party functions almost seems, in itself, an extraordinary admission to make given the fact that one of VBVK's main functions was sending Party members to the front. Since the extract seems largely to have been drawn on Congress material, then the latter quote can be inferred to have been a statement made at the Congress, or even perhaps part of the secret military minutes of the Congress. Either way, given the overall demand of the Congress for a purely Party organisation, in charge of the political apparatus of the Red Army, it would appear that the Congress had found a number of important deficiencies in the organisation and functioning of the organ. That, even on the eve of the Congress, VBVK was still having a hard time in getting its message across to the political departments and, indeed the entire political apparatus of the Red Army, is further borne out by the fact that, on

16th March 1919, VBVK still had to send a circular to all the relevant political institutions operating in the Red Army, explaining the functions of its single, most important department-the Agitation-education department.² Thus, there would appear to have been still a widespread ignorance of the basic functions of VBVK, even on the very eve of the Congress itself.

The 8th Party Congress opened in Moscow on 18th March 1919 and lasted until the 23rd March 1919. Altogether, there were some 300 delegates at the Congress, representing 313,766 Party members.³ According to one source, some 30,000 Army Communists were represented at the Congress and this, combined with the still serious military position of the Soviet Republic, ensured that the military question was one of the important questions on the agenda of the Congress. There was even an appearance of a "military opposition" to the CC's approved theses on the military question, which helped to make the military debate an important and lively affair. Unfortunately, however, it is true that the military part of the Congress' debate was not entirely held in open session, so to speak, even until this day, not all the relevant minutes of the Congress' record have been published. However, there are enough bits and pieces of information available to enable us to examine part of what the Congress had to say about the political apparatus of the

Red Army.

Due to the relatively large number of delegates who signalled their intention to speak on the military question-64-it was decided to transfer the debate on the military question to special sessions of the Congress' military section.⁴ In fact, some 85 delegates took part in the work of the military section and the latter met on the 19th, 20th and 21st March 1919.^{4A} Despite the importance of the military debate, Trotsky did not, in actual fact, attend the debate nor, for that matter, the Congress. In a conversation that he had with various representatives of the press on 17th March 1919, Trotsky briefly stated why he would not be attending the Congress:

I personally deeply regret that I will not be able to take part in the debate on this question[the military question-SM]:with the agreement of the Central Committee, I will be going to the front.⁵

Despite his enforced presence at the front, on military duty, this did not mean that Trotsky, or RVSR, were given an easier ride at the Congress; on the contrary, it perhaps would have been better had Trotsky personally attended the Congress, in order to rebuke the criticism levelled against him, rather than allow the subsequent mythology, which grew up surrounding Trotsky's non-appearance at the Congress, any basis for taking hold. However, he was at the front and, on his behalf, G.Ya. Sokolnikov, presented the main report to the Congress on

commissars, was not a proper debate per se. As will be described below, a number of prominent political personalities-Smilga being one of them-argued that the role of the commissar had changed so much that he was no longer fulfilling the same functions that he had been fulfilling since March 1918. Contrary to what has been portrayed in Soviet historiography of the subject, Smilga did not advocate the total abolishment of the commissars in the Red Army right away-he was in favour of a gradual transition in the powers and duties of the commissars, so they gradually became more like the Red Army commanders than anything else.⁹ It could well be the case that this particular issue was debated upon, at length, in the Congress, simply that the relevant section of the minutes has not been made public yet. Until they are done so, it is impossible to assess the real impact of Smilga's suggestion.

In concluding this particular part of the report, Sokolnikov then went on to state where he thought the future lay for the future development of the political apparatus of the Red Army:

there are two methods for political education on the front: either it is led by the Communist Party cells, which, in order to accomplish this task, create their own political apparatus, or the Communist propaganda is carried out like the state propaganda of Communism. I think, comrades, that this congress must vote for the state propaganda of Communism on the front, that the direction of this propaganda is in the hands of the political departments of the armies.¹⁰

This would seem to be a somewhat hidden indication that the Bolsheviks were coming round to the idea that in order for the political work in the Red Army to be carried out to a greater effect, then it had to be carried out on the level of a state organ, ie that it was no longer the preserve of a purely government department, or organ, that it was far too big for the concerns of a single, governmental organ. It also seems to confirm the dominant position of the political departments in the future conduct of this state propaganda-a position which, in itself, merely reflected the true course of events at the front. The dominant political organ was the political department. There could be little serious doubt about that.

However, as stated in the introduction to this particular section, there was opposition to the CC's theses, as presented by Sokolnikov and the man who was to officially espouse the views of the "military opposition" at the Congress, V.M.Smirnov, was himself no stranger to the political work being conducted at the front.¹¹ In a general statement on the link between the political consciousness of the peasant and the Red Army soldier, Smirnov underlined the importance of the political work being discussed:

there is not the slightest doubt that the conscientiousness of the peasant today is still weak, and for us it is extremely important that we get him on our side, especially to convince him in the communality of our

interests. We must as widely as possible develop the political consciousness of the Red Army soldiers, who often come to us from the ranks of the middle peasants.¹²

Smirnov, whilst not denying the importance of the work to be undertaken, was critical, however, of the way that the work was to be carried out:

despite the colossal importance of political work, in the way that the army is organised, political work is carried out almost entirely in a bureaucratic manner. In front of me is a copy of the journal, "Voennaya Mysl", the organ of the Revolutionary Military Soviet of the Eastern Front, in which is described a series of draft instructions on the organisation of the political departments in the army. What do we see? The political department is to consist of a chief of the department and a whole range of sub-departments-for example, a general, military-registration, military-organisational, etc. Can such an institution carry out the work? Of course not...The only way[that the work can be carried out-SM]is to disentangle the bureaucracy and build political work on the basis of a comradely unit of Communists.¹³

Thus, as far as Smirnov and the "military opposition" were concerned, the way forward for the future development of the Red Army's political apparatus was, in some respects, very reminiscent of what it had looked like way back at the very beginning. There would be no political departments, therefore coordination of work, which had always been a problem, would be now near impossible and duplication of effort would be rife. In other words, although the general idea behind Smirnov's proposals was attractive-ie cutting down on the bureaucratic approach and allowing more individual initiative at the front-the practical suggestion that political work should be carried out solely on the basis of comradely units of Communists

did not attract the support of the majority of the delegates at the Congress. To a certain extent, though, the Congress did take note of some of the views of the "military opposition". For instance, in one of the resolutions of the Congress, the latter stated that:

the political departments of the army, under the direct leadership of the CC, will conduct in the future a selection of the commissars, removing from their midst all casual, unstable careerist elements.¹⁴

However, despite the worries of the "military opposition" finding some expression in part of the resolutions, on the whole, their worries were largely rejected. The Congress rejected the suggestion that the Party organs in the army should have control over the military activity of the units for instance, stating that:

approving, in general...the instructions, worked out by the Central Committee, on the rights and responsibilities of the Communist Party cells, commissars and the political departments, the Congress also makes it obligatory on all comrades, working in the army, to¹⁵ unswervingly comply with the aforementioned instructions.

Thus, there was to be no let up, as regards the political organs in the Red Army, as well as the CP representatives in the Red Army, carrying out the necessary military orders and instructions unswervingly and with total obedience. There would be no return to the past situation, when selective commissars, or other political representatives in the army, took a hand in deciding matters, which were purely the domain of the proper

military authorities.

Of course, as stated earlier, one of the main features of the work of the 8th Party Congress was the decision to transfer the burden of political work away from the Front onto the Army and the divisional political departments.¹⁶ As shown earlier, this was already happening at the front, so the Congress was basically, once again, confirming a trend that had already appeared on the front. In an interesting commentary on the latter, Yurenev, writing in his capacity as a member of the RMS of the Eastern Front, wrote in June 1919:

the 8th Congress of the Russian Communist Party, in its resolution on military policy, recognised the fact that the centre of burden for political work in the existing army should be transferred from the front political departments to the political departments of the armies and the divisions.

The decision was brought about because of the fact that Front political departments, due to the force of the military situation, are torn away from the Red Army masses and have lost their vital link with them...thus, it was completely natural that, after many months of experience of political work, that Congress should decide to shift the burden of political work from the front to the army political department, which stands much closer to the Red Army masses and has a link with the divisions. All direct political ^{work} has to be carried out namely by the latter [the divisional political departments-SM], but only under the most careful attention and leadership of the army [political departments-SM].¹⁷

Thus, through the speeches of the majority of the Congress and the "military opposition", it would appear that very few of the delegates actually had a kind word to say about the work VBVK. Indeed, in some respects, the speeches and resolutions quoted reflect that VBVK did have

a fairly rough time of things at the Congress. Given the present sources of information at the Congress, it would appear that there was a great deal of hostility towards VBVK and, in one statement from a prominent Soviet military historian on the subject, VBVK had already managed to attract a lot of very powerful enemies:

the Congress of the Party devoted much attention to the work of the central political organ of the Red Army. The All-Russian Bureau of Military Commissars...in connection with the growing tasks placed before the commissars, was not already able to encompass the full complexity of their work. On top of that, the All-Russian Bureau of Military Commissars was also not ready for the leadership of Party work on the front, which was being heaped on it in connection with the transformation of the political departments into the leading army-Party organs...At the Congress, delegates R.S.Zemlyachka, A.F.Myasnikov, J.V.Stalin and others, unleashed a fierce critique of the All-Russian Bureau of Military Commissars, pointing out actual shortcomings in its work. The Party Congress agreed with the proposal of J.V.Stalin and other delegates to abolish the All-Russian Bureau of Military Commissars and creating, in its place, the Political department of the revolutionary Military Soviet of the Republic.¹⁸

There are a number of points in the above passage which are obviously worthy of further detailed examination.

Overall, though, it is a fairly balanced assessment of what probably did occur at the Congress, concerning the fate of VBVK. VBVK, as shown in the previous sections, failed in its attempts to control the work of both the commissars and the political departments and both points were to prove crucial in its apparent lack of support at the Congress.

As demonstrated in the last section, as the importance

of the political departments grew, then, curiously enough, the power and influence of VBVK diminished. VBVK simply was not able to impose either its will or power over the work of the political departments, operating at the front. There was not the machinery, so to speak, in existence in order to allow VBVK any real chance of increasing the flow of information and materials between VBVK and the front political apparatus. Therefore, when it came to the crunch at the Party Congress, VBVK did not attract a great deal of support. If one looks back at the list of people who spoke out against VBVK-Zemlyachka, Myasnikov, Stalin, etc-regardless of what they were to do in the immediate future, as can be seen from their relevant biographies, all three had played a leading role in the Red Army's political apparatus, at one stage or another.¹⁹

Under different circumstances, the chiefs of the political departments should have been the natural allies of VBVK and yet, as detailed, they were amongst its fiercest critics.

Another factor which also would not have helped VBVK's cause any is the possibility that VBVK may well have been an early victim of a possible power struggle going behind the scenes of the Congress. If one examines the account of the Congress in the official history of the Congress, one finds the following interesting statement:

many delegates, both those who took part in the 'military opposition' and those who supported the CC sharply and, to

a significant extent, justly criticised the activity of the military establishment. The chief of the military department, Trotsky, did not take into account the opinion of the Army Party organisations, often ignored the rights of commissars, displaying a negative attitude towards them...by his lordly manner and dictatorial ways, Trotsky set against himself personally many Communist-military workers...this was shown not only during the actual debates at the Congress, but also during the elections for membership of the CC. 50 delegates voted against Trotsky's²⁰ candidature. This was a serious political warning.

Further support for the anti-Trotsky nature of the proceedings is revealed in another extract from Yu.P.Petrov's work quoted earlier:

the activity of the central military organs was severely criticised at the Congress: the Field Staff, the All-Russian General Staff and also the Revolutionary Military Soviet of the Republic, were all criticised for their bureaucratic methods of work...Congress delegates, K.E.Voroshilov, F.I.Goloshchekin and S.K.Minin and others noted that Trotsky did not know the real position on the fronts, the composition of the troops, the problems which had to be tackled.²¹

Whether there was, in any fact, any truth in these charges levelled against Trotsky, was not too important. What was more important was the fact that they were being made and that anything which he was remotely involved in was in for a fair amount of criticism at the Congress. As stated earlier, given the actual anti-Trotsky feeling at the Congress, it was no real surprise that VBVK, linked to Trotsky through Yurenev, was also fair game for the critics of Trotsky himself:

the delegates, especially those from the Army, criticised sharply the All-Russian Bureau of Military Commissars, headed by K.K.Yurenev. R.S.Zemlyachka, in her speech, stated that unfit commissars were being sent to the units

and that Yurenev and the other supporters of Trotsky, did not know what was happening in the Army, did not even know what was happening in the Communist Party cells.²²

Thus, the latter combined with VBVK's failure to make any real impact on the front political apparatus more than likely sealed the end for VBVK. In all of this, Stalin would appear to have played a not insignificant role. After all, he is usually given the credit for proposing the abolishment of VBVK, as previously noted. Stalin's dislike of the organ probably stemmed both from its close ties with Trotsky and his own personal experience of political work on the Southern Front. In a number of early accounts of Stalin's role at the 8th Party Congress, Stalin is supposed to have criticised VBVK in fairly sharp tones:

comrade Stalin criticised sharply...the work of the All-Russian Bureau of Military Commissars(VBVK)for its inadequate leadership of the units, unsatisfactory selection of cadres and other inadequacies and mistakes.²³

Further on in the above article, the author apparently made use of Stalin's speech to the 8th Party Congress, and, in a quote from Stalin's speech to the Congress, noted Stalin as having said the following:

political education in the Army has great significance. We must put the question whether the All-Russian Bureau of Military Commissars should be reorganised or abolished; it is necessary that both in the rear and on the front, units are trained in the revolutionary spirit; it is necessary to achieve this in order that, at any moment, a regular army is ready to go into battle.²⁴ If all of this is true, then it would appear that VBVK had

managed to attract a lot of enemies, but very few friends. Not even Trotsky was there to defend himself or VBVK; Yurenev was there, but apparently made no reference to the work of VBVK, and only discussed the electivity of the command staff.²⁵ Thus, with VBVK facing apparent opposition from all sides and no one, not even its Chairman, prepared to make any positive statements on its behalf, VBVK was almost doomed from the very beginning. The relevant resolution, which formally abolished VBVK, was, in many respects, very low key:

to abolish Vseburvoenkom. To create a Political department of Revvoensovet of the Republic, transferring to the department all of the functions of Vseburvoenkom, putting in charge of it a member of the CC of the RCP(B) who will have the rights of a member of the Revvoensovet of the republic.²⁶

Not long after the end of the 8th Party Congress, a session of the CC was held on 25th March 1919 which, apart from electing the membership of the Politburo and the Orgburo, also examined the problem of "strengthening the central organ of the Red Army's Party-political apparatus".²⁷ The CC resolution noted, at its meeting, that:

up until the transfer of functions of the All-Russian Bureau of Military Commissars, all instructions of Vseburvoenkom will remain in force and must, as before, be carried out.²⁸

Thus, it was not until 18th April 1919 that the new Political department of the Revolutionary Military Soviet

of the Republic came into formal existence and VBVK ceased to exist. On the 15th May 1919, the Political department was reformed and renamed and became the Political Administration of the Revolutionary Military Soviet of the Republic(referred to by its abbreviation earlier as PUR).²⁹ The new Chief of PUR was not to be Yurenev, needless to say, nor was it to be I.N.Smirnov either, but one member of the CC who had a wide variety of experience in various areas of Party work-I.T.Smilga.³⁰ Not only was Smilga a member of both RVSR and the CC, but PUR was made subordinate to the CC and that, arguably more than anything else, was to ensure that from now on the new centralised political organ for the Red Army would be more subject to the demands of the Party's CC. VBVK had shown that with the distrust shown towards an organ which was not a totally controlled Party organ, the political apparatus at the front had tremendous difficulty in establishing a proper working relationship. It would remain to be seen, though, how well PUR would work with the front political apparatus.

Despite the eventual demise of VBVK, not all of the history of the Red Army's first real, serious attempt at a centralised political organ makes for sorry reading. It should never be forgotten that VBVK was faced with immense tasks, when it was created in April 1918, not least of which was the almost continuous need to re-assess exactly

what was VBVK designed to do. Was it just a coordinating body for the work of the military commissars in the units? Then what happened when the political departments began to assert themselves? Whose interests became more dominant then? Regardless of the answers to these questions, it has to be stated that the Red Army's political and cultural-educational apparatus, despite all its faults and mistakes, were in a much stronger position in April 1919 than they had been, say, a year earlier. For instance, the total number of CP cells in the 7 military districts (Moscow, Petrograd, Orel, Yaroslavl, Urals, Volga and, finally, the Western MD) stood at 1,378; the total number of literacy schools, again in the same geographical area, stood at 425; the total number of Red Army clubs was 381, etc.³¹ As a PUR report for 1920 stated:

political work during VBVK's existence was placed at the necessary level...cultural-educational work developed rapidly in comparison with the period of existence of the All-Russian Collegiate.³²

However, on saying that, as the 1920 report itself stated, there was still a lot of work which VBVK had not been able to get to grips with:

nevertheless, during the period of existence of the All-Russian Bureau of Military Commissars, the problem of correctly constructing the political-educational apparatus and its normal and productive functioning was far from fully solved. It would be a mistake to think that this apparatus was a smooth machine, operating quickly and easily in all of its parts. Whole armies did not find answers from the centre to their questions.³²

Thus, in many respects, in evaluating the whole activity of VBVK, one has to say that although it did a lot, it did not do enough and, in establishing some sort of control over the work and activity of the commissars and the political departments, it was largely a failure. The best epigraph to VBVK was the opening sentence of Smilga's anniversary article on the creation of PUR, published in 1924:

PUR is the direct successor to the All-Russian Bureau of Military Commissars.³⁴

Given its largely chequered history, little more could be said.

NOTES(1):-

1. "Politorgany Sovetskikh Vooruzhennykh Sil." M.1984, p.35.
2. "Polozheniya i instruktsii po postanovke politicheskoi-prosvetitelnoi raboty v Krasnoi Armii." M.1919, p.300.
3. A.A.Solovyev, "Sezdy i konferentsii KPSS. Spravochnik." M.1986, p.122.
4. ¹⁴⁹ N.N.Tsvetayev, "Voennye voprosy v resheniyakh VIII Sezda RKP(B)." M.1960, p.50.
5. L.D.Trotsky, "Kak vooruzhalas revoliutsiya." Vol.2, bk.1. M.1924, p.47.
6. "Vosmoi sezd RKP(B). Mart 1919 goda. Protokoly." M.1959, p.143.
7. Ibid., p.151.
8. Ibid.
9. See the relevant section in the next chapter.
10. "Vosmoi sezd...", p.152.
11. See the relevant biographical entry at the end of this work.
12. "Vosmoi sezd...", p.155.
13. Ibid., p.155.
14. "KPSS v rezoliutsiyakh i resheniyakh sezdov, konferentsiy i plenumov TsK. 1917-1922." M.1983, vol.2, p.97.
15. "KPSS v rezoliutsiyakh....", p.98.
16. Ibid., p.102.

NOTES(2):-

17.K.K.Yurenev, "Blizhe k massam", ('Voennaya Mysl', 30.6.1919), Simbirsk, p.20.

18.Yu.P.Petrov, "KPSS-rukovoditel i vospitatel Krasnoi Armii(1918-1920 gg.)." M.1961, p.218.

19.See the relevant biographical entry.

20."Istoriya Kommunisticheskoi Partii Sovetskogo Soiuza." M.1968, vol.3, bk.2, pp.275-76.

21.Petrov, "KPSS-rukovoditel...", p.218.

22.Tsvetayev, "Voennye voprosy...", p.53.

23.M.Bazanov, "Voenniy vopros na VIII sezde RKP(B)."
('Partiino-politicheskaya rabota v RKKA.' No.5, M.1939, p.41).

24. Ibid., p.41.

25."Vosmoi sezd...", p.76.

26. Ibid., p.102.

27.P.I.Gridasov, "Sozdanie partiino-politicheskogo apparata Krasnoi Armii v period deyatel'nosti Vsepossiyskogo Buro Voennykh Komissarov." Avtoreferat, Leningrad, 1973, p.19.

28. Ibid., p.19.

29."Politorgany Sovetskikh...", p.35.

30. Ibid., p.35.

31."Kratkiy ocherk kulturnoi-politicheskoi raboty v Krasnoi Armii za 1918 god." M.1919, p.143.

NOTES(3):-

32. "Partiino-politicheskaya rabota v Krasnoi Armii(aprel 1918-fevral 1919). Dokumenty." Vol.1, M.1961, p.75.

33. Ibid., p.76.

34. I.T.Smilga, "Osnovanie PUR'a." ('Politrabotnik', No.4-5, April-May 1924, p.9).

CHAPTER THREE(SECTION ONE):-

THE CREATION AND ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE POLITICAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE REVOLUTIONARY MILITARY SOVIET OF THE REPUBLIC (MAY 1919-NOVEMBER 1920).

Before embarking on a detailed examination of the activity of PUR in 1919-1920, it was thought best that the opening section to this complex subject consist of the necessary background to the formation of PUR, as well as providing the reader with all the vital organisational detail at the beginning. In such a way, it is hoped that the reader will then be able to make better use of the information that then follows this section. Thus, this section will evaluate and examine the following main themes:

- 1)the contribution of VBVK to the organisational structure of PUR;
- 2)examine the various sub-departments that went to make up PUR in this period;
- 3)examine the relationship of PUR to the other military and political organs of the period(most notably the CC and RVSR).

In writing this particular section, it should be stressed that a number of very rare primary and secondary source materials have been used and that, to the author's

best knowledge, the information contained both in this section, and in the other sections that follow, should provide the reader with the most complete picture yet available of the work of the Red Army's main political organ during the Civil War. However, this should not be taken to mean that there will not be any "gaps" in the sections that follow; what is being said is that much new information will be made available on the work and organisational structure of a body which has been little studied both here and in the USSR itself.

Following the decision of the 8th Party Congress to abolish VBVK, the way was made clear for, at least, a partial reconstruction of the Red Army's political apparatus, both that operating at the front and, more importantly, that operating in the centre. Thus, on the 18th April 1919, the Political department of RVSR, as previously outlined in the last chapter, was temporarily recreated and, not too long after that, PUR itself came into formal existence.¹ As described in the previous section, between the closing of the 8th Party Congress and the 18th April 1919, all the former decrees and orders of VBVK remained in force.² With the recreation of the Political department of RVSR, however, this was a reasonably clear indication that the Party was preparing to introduce a new, central organ, in charge of the political apparatus of the Red Army. Thus, on 26th May

1919, by order of RVSR, the Political department of RVSR was renamed and became the Political administration of the Revolutionary Military Soviet of the Republic(PUR for short).³ Unfortunately, the truncated version of the decree that appears in vol.2 of "Partiino-politicheskaya rabota...",(M.1964)does not list any of the functions of the new organ, or any details concerning its organisational structure or even any details about its membership. All of these matters have to be solved entirely independently of the decree. Thus, according to one early source on the history of the Red Army's political apparatus, the staffing of PUR owed quite a lot to its predecessor, VBVK:

the entire staff of VBVK was used in the formation of the political department of RVSR. The Political department existed in agreement with the statutes of VBVK and carried out its functions. On the 26th May 1919, by order of RVSR...the former was transformed into the political Administration of RVSR.⁴

The clear implication from the above statement is that all, or virtually all, the staff transferred from VBVK directly into PUR. This would have made a great deal of sense, as it would ensure that a lot of useful and vital experience, which was there thanks to the work of VBVK, was not lost. However, a caveat has to be introduced here. After all, given the castigation of VBVK's leadership at the 8th Party Congress, it is extremely unlikely that the entire leadership of VBVK were involved

in the new organ-for instance, Yurenev himself was not involved in PUR; his term of appointment(16th April 1919) on the RMS of the Eastern Front even precedes the formal creation of the Political department of RVSR.⁵ It is probably also the case, although presently impossible to prove due to the lack of the necessary primary source material, that the majority of the departmental leaders of VBVK were also not used in the organisational make-up of PUR, although, on saying that, as will be shown later, one did survive and obtained a fairly high position in the PUR organisation-her name was V.D.Kasparova.⁶

Although they have not been republished with the original order from 1919, it has been possible to track down the original staff numbers of PUR, as envisaged by the May 1919 order. They are listed at the end of this ~~disposition~~ as an appendix. However, a number of interesting points may be made about them here PUR was to be based on four main departments-these being a general department, a political department, an educational department and, finally, a literary-publications department.⁷ controlling the work of the departments was the Chief of PUR and his assistants.⁸ The largest of the departments listed was the general department("obshchiy otdel") which, judging by the functions of the staff given, was in overall charge of the administration of PUR, communication facilities, finances and so on.⁹ A calculation of the total number of

staff listed reveals that it had a grand total of 469 people in its employ.¹⁰ However, although this was very large number of people, it should be remembered that this figure included 240 "packers and messengers" which, according to another source, were for "the distribution of literature" to the front.¹¹ Unlike the other departments involved in the organisational structure of PUR, it has not been possible to track down the name of the person in charge of this particular department-despite its overall size and undoubted importance of the department to the proper and effective running of PUR, no Soviet historian has identified the name of the person in overall charge of the department.

By comparison, the Political department was fairly small. According to the list of staff involved, the majority of the staff were divided into four sections: information(7); statistics(10); agitation-propaganda(4+) and, finally, administration(21). The figure for the number of people involved in the agitation-propaganda section is like that because under this particular section, there was also a "agitational courses" part, the number of staff for which has not been noted.¹² Other than the staff duly noted, the department also had a further 10 "travelling inspectors" who, as their name suggests, went around inspecting the units to see how the work was being carried out at the front.¹³ Judging by the

various sections that went to make up this particular department, it would appear that this department was mainly concerned with both collating information, as regards what was happening at the front, as well as inspecting units and, of course, distributing propaganda to the front.

As regards who was in charge of the department, it has been possible to both track down the name of the person in charge, as well as a number of interesting biographical details on the man. Although a full biography of the man appears in the special appendix attached to the end of the dissertation, it would not be out of place here to note a few of the more salient points. The man in charge of the department was R.P.Katanyan, a man who had played an active part in the revolutionary movement since 1901.¹⁴ Like most of his generation of student activists, before the October Revolution, he had served various terms of imprisonment and worked underground for the Bolshevik Party in Orenburg, Moscow, Tbilisi, etc.¹⁵ In 1919, he served with 11th Army's political department, editing the newspaper, "Krasniy Voin".¹⁶ In 1920-1921, he became Chief of the agitation and propaganda department of the CC-a possible testament to his work with PUR.¹⁷ His post-Civil war career, however, becomes slightly unsavoury, as he eventually became a senior assistant to the USSR's State Prosecutor, taking part in the 1930s "show

trials".¹⁸ However, in 1938, he himself was arrested, sentenced and not released until 1955. He died some 11 years after release.¹⁹ To all intents and purposes, as will be shown below, the career of Katanyan before the October 1917 revolution, would appear to have been fairly typical for those who worked in the upper echelons of PUR, at this time.

The second largest department was, perhaps surprisingly at first glance, the Educational department. According to the list of staff, the latter numbered 96 in total and were spread over a number of sections and bureaux.²⁰ Amongst the various sections and bureaux were a library bureau, a bureau of physical culture, a museum bureau, etc.²¹ The single largest bureau/section within this particular department was the joint theatrical/musical bureau with a combined staff of 17.²² Looking at the range of bureaux and sections, it would appear that the primary interest of the department was the conduct of cultural and educational work in the units.

Thankfully, it is also possible to state who was in charge of this particular department. This is the only identifiable case where a person who had an important role to play in the running of VBVK, also had an important position in the running of PUR; the person in question being V.D.Kasparova.²³ Unfortunately, unlike Katanyan, there is very little information on Kasparova, either when

she worked in VBVK, or when she worked in PUR. However, what information that is available does make for some interesting reading, including one very peculiar item of information which, if true, would upset our existing knowledge of Stalin's personal life!

The information that is available on Kasparova usually refers to the post-Civil War period, specifically as regards her activity in the the Left Opposition group in 1928.²⁴ In the latter reference, Kasparova signed an appeal, by the Left Oppositionists and sent to the Communist International, against expulsion from the CPSU. Interestingly enough, among the other signatories to the appeal were such prominent figures of the Red Army's political establishment as Rakovsky, Smilga, Beloborodov, etc.²⁵ Could this have been an indication of some sort of shared outlook, stemming from the days of the Civil War? In a more recent reference to Kasparova, one memoirist stated that Kasparova was exiled to Siberia in 1928, alongwith Radek.²⁶ He also goes as far as to state that Kasparova was a former wife of Stalin!²⁷ However, there is no supporting evidence for this claim. whatsoever. In a footnote on Kasparova, there is the following piece of information about her:

Vera Kasparova was an Old Bolshevik who was in charge of work among women of the East for the party and for the Comintern's International Women's Secretariat, beginning in 1921. The Secretariat was dissolved in 1926. Kasparova, a leading member of the Left Opposition, was expelled at the fifteenth congress in 1927.²⁸

The fact that she was involved in such work for the Party would seem to indicate that she, herself, may have come from the Caucasus region and that she may have had, other than her experience of working in both VBVK and PUR, pre-revolutionary qualifications in teaching, or something of that nature. Of course, this is mere speculation but, given the fact that there is so little information presently available on her, even some speculation on her pre-revolutionary career is warranted.

The smallest of the departments of PUR was the literary-publications department. It had a total staff of 45 people, split into a number of sections and bureaux.²⁹ the largest of the sections was the editorial board, which numbered some 20 people.³⁰ Judging by the published list of staff, its main duties would appear to have been concerned with producing the necessary volume and type of literature required for the front.³¹ As regards the actual leadership of this particular department, then the earliest name that can be traced to this post is V.P.Polonsky, the earliest identification of the latter with the relevant post being November 1919.³² There is so much biographical information available-he was a very prominent Marxist literary critic, both before and after the October revolution-that there is no real need to go into too much detail about him here.³³ Suffice it to say

that, in the post Civil War period, he was to become no less than editor of "Noviy Mir".³⁴

If we add up then all the relevant figures listed above, as well as the four people who, as it were, were the "brain" of PUR, ie the Chief and his support staff, then we arrive at a grand total of 663 people working actually in PUR itself.³⁵ This would make PUR a reasonably large organ and, in one explanation for its size, one early Soviet historian of the Red Army's Civil War apparatus wrote the following:

the large number of staff was, on the one hand, due to a number of reasons which also were apparent in other Soviet organs, being considerably swollen at the time and, on the other hand, it should also be remembered that PUR was an organ of a distributive nature having, for example, 240 men for the distribution of literature...it had a large supply apparatus which, other than receiving materials from Soviet organs and then distributing them to the local political organs, also had the function of preparing such materials. It also had a large number of instructors, going out to the localities-78 men, in all.³⁶

(PUR's overall structure, at this time, is shown in appendix one).

If one looks back at the October 1918 list of staff for VBVK, which gave a grand total of 286 employees working for VBVK, then it is obvious that PUR was a much larger structure-more than double the size, in actual fact, than VBVK. Unfortunately, it is difficult to make direct comparisons between individual departments of PUR and VBVK, as both were constructed along different

lines: the only department that was common to both of them, in a recognisable form, was the Education department, although even there one has to introduce the caveat that in VBVK's 1918 structure, the latter was a sub-department, not a full fledged separate department, as was the case with PUR. However, there would appear to have been a significant increase in the number of personnel allocated to working in this particular area-in October 1918, VBVK had a staff of 16 people working in the Education department;³⁷ PUR's figure for the same department, however, was 96-a very significant increase, even given the fact that the sub-department was now a department, in its own right.³⁸

Arguably, the main deciding factor for the success of PUR was in terms of its relationship with the political apparatus of the Red Army at the front and also the relationship between PUR and the centralised political apparatus of the Soviet state. If PUR is to be judged as more of a success than VBVK, then the nature of the relationship between, say, PUR and the political departments and PUR and the CC has to be investigated and analysed. Without prejudging the issue too much, it has to be said that a number of the problems which had faced VBVK were also to rear their ugly heads and be a problem for PUR, as well. In some respects, the political apparatus still had to cut a few teeth before being able

to show its true worth to the Bolshevik drive for victory.

In a article which a former Deputy-Chief of PUR (Ch.G. Rakovsky) wrote in 1920, he summarised the relationship between PUR and the political departments thus:

in its organisational relationship, the Political Administration of the Republic was a hierarchical organ, similar to many other hierarchical military organs. Just as to the Revvoensovet of the Republic were subordinated the revvoensovets of the fronts, the revvoensovets of the armies...then so to the Political Administration of the Republic were subordinated the political administrations of the fronts, to the political administrations of the fronts were subordinated the political administration of the armies, to the political administrations of the armies were subordinated the divisional political administrations, to the divisional political administrations were subordinated the brigade political commissars, to the brigade political commissars were subordinated the regimental commissars, etc.³⁹

Obviously, the distinct impression to be gained from the above article was that from top to bottom, PUR's orders and decrees would and could be faithfully carried out to the letter. Unfortunately, for a whole host of reasons, the theory and the practise were not one and the same thing. PUR was still to suffer from a distinct lack of information emanating from the front, which in itself alone meant that PUR would have problems in a number of areas, eg allocating the correct number of Party workers to the units, knowing what were the basic needs and requirements of each of the units, knowing exactly what was happening at the front, etc. If the information did not flow, then, similar to the position of VBVK, PUR had

to act with a good deal less authority than should have been necessary.

As previously mentioned, the original intention of the military resolutions of the 8th Party Congress, as they were supposed to affect the Red Army's political apparatus anyway, was the introduction of a much more centralised political organ for the Red Army, made more accountable to the Party's CC. What was also important was that the new political organ also had a good relationship with the Soviet Republic's leading military organ of the period- RVSR. As an early account of the history of the Red Army's political apparatus stated in 1922:

at the 8th Party Congress of the RCP(B), the military delegates from the provinces strongly insisted that all political work in the Red Army must be directly subordinated to the supervision of the CC of the Party, for this it was necessary to create a political administration, in the form of an autonomous department of the Revvoensovet of the Republic, at the head of which must be placed a member of the CC of the RCP(B) with the rights of a member of the revvoensovet of the Republic.⁴⁰

In effect, this happened with the appointment of Ivar Tennisovich Smilga as chief of PUR in May 1919.⁴¹ Smilga had been a member of the Party's CC as far back as April 1917.⁴² His appointment as a member of RVSR was made on 8th May 1919, therefore before his appointment as Chief of PUR, Smilga had already fulfilled both requirements for the job-ie membership of both the CC and the RVSR.⁴³ Thus, in the form of its Chief, PUR was tied into both the

military and political apparatus of the Soviet state and, due to its representation on both the most powerful organs of the Soviet state, had ensured itself a unique position, amongst all other Soviet organs. PUR was alone in having dual membership, so to speak, of both the CC and the RVSR. No other organ was to receive such treatment and certainly the fact that PUR was accorded such status was probably both a reflection of how important had been the relevant debate at the preceding Party congress, as well as the fact that the CC was adopting a much more serious, determined line, as regards the conduct of political and cultural-educational work in the Red Army units.

Much work was now conducted through PUR which had earlier been the prerogative of other parts of the central political apparatus, eg, the mobilisation of Party members soon became an area of responsibility of PUR.⁴⁴ This meant that in certain areas of work, PUR worked in close contact with organs like the Secretariat and the Orgburo. Indeed, a point worth noting here is that a number of Deputy-Chiefs of PUR, namely A.G.Beloborodov, L.P.Serebryakov, Ch.G.Rakovsky, as will be detailed later, were members of the Orgburo.⁴⁵ This would seem to imply that, formally or otherwise, there was some sort of link-up between the Orgburo and PUR, although the exact nature is still impossible to determine at present. Thus, through Smilga and its close working relationship with a

number of the other leading Party organs of the period, it is easy to see that, in many respects, PUR was in an organisationally much stronger relationship with the other central military and political organs of the period. That, however, there were still problems to overcome, should not be underestimated, but, at least, PUR had links with the centre which had not previously existed with VBVK.

Curiously enough, until comparatively late in its history, no single set of instructions were produced which described the functions of PUR in any detail. This should not be taken to imply, however, that PUR enjoyed a particular level of organisational stability, previously unheard of before in other parts of the Soviet military and political establishment; on the contrary, it could have been precisely why there was a lack of a concrete set of instructions that PUR, in the words of one author, "restructured itself 15 times" in the course of the first year of its activity!⁴⁶ Certainly, throughout 1919, there took place a number of identifiable organisational changes which, on the whole, tended to add further bits onto the overall organisational structure of PUR. These will now be described.

In June 1919, the Military department of the Central Executive Committee's Publications' section was transferred to PUR.⁴⁷ On the 31st July 1919, an

Inspectorate of Cultural-Educational Work in the Red Army was created under PUR's control⁴⁸ and then, on 12th Novemebr 1919, the commission, "Krasniy Podarok"(lit."Red Present")was transferred to PUR's control also.⁴⁹ At the beginning of 1920, a further two new departments were created-the Eastern department and the Polish department.⁵⁰ As their names would suggest, they were designed to look after the interests of specific nationalities. In the case of the Eastern department, it was in charge of conducting propaganda-agitational work amongst the Muslim peoples of the Soviet Republic.⁵¹

However, although there is documentation for the existence of all these organisational changes, the picture becomes somewhat confused when one begins analysing a series of articles and statements, made by the then Deputy-Chief of PUR, Rakovsky, on the work and organisation of PUR in 1919, when he began to discuss the work not of a "general department", as previously noted, but of an "administrative-finance" department, etc.⁵² Whether these were new departments or new names for the old departments is impossible to say at present, without the relevant staff figures, one cannot say whether the departments were growing, stayed the same or had even been cut, so it is impossible to tell whether the general department was the same as the administrative-finance department. Certainly, more evidence would have to be

produced to assess whether, in actual fact, these new departments were new departments and not simply old departments renamed.

Looking at the "new" departments, however, it is possible to detail the precise nature of their functions and, in such a way, help to arrive at a much clearer picture of the organisational structure and activity of PUR at this time. Thus, the administrative-finance department was in charge of supplying the necessary amounts of money for the wages and projects of the various political departments, scattered all over the Republic.⁵³ In view of the fact that this department was in charge of the purse strings, it can be safely assumed that it was either the single, most important department or one of the most important of all the departments that went to make up PUR. According to the departmental report, in the second-half of 1919 alone, the department allocated 215 million rubles to the Front political departments alone and a further 106,250,000 rubles to the okrug military districts.⁵⁴ The department also financed the agitational-educational work being undertaken by the guberniya and uezd military commissariats.⁵⁵ On a broader scale, the department also financed the literacy schools, operating in the Red Army, as well as the Red Army clubs, the mobile theatres, etc.⁵⁶

The agitation-information department was split into

three sections-these being agitation-instruction; information-statistics and, finally, mobilisation-distribution.⁵⁷ The first section was in charge of instructing agitators, watching over the political courses, helping to unify the work being carried out in the units, etc.⁵⁸ The second section, as its name would suggest, had to collate information and statistics for the compilation of reports, on political work amongst other things, so important to the working of PUR. The final section in this particular department was, in accordance with the relevant decrees and instructions of the Party's CC, in charge of the mobilisation and distribution of Party members to the front and their "rational use" in the Army's political organs.⁵⁹ Other than the functions listed above, the department was also concerned with the distribution of papers and posters in the Red Army-similar, in some respects, to the work of the Literary-publications department.⁶⁰

According to Bakovsky's speech to the first All-Russian Congress of Political Workers held in Moscow in December 1919, the task of the cultural-educational department was, simply, "the struggle against illiteracy".⁶¹ Apparently, in the first half of 1919 alone, some 150 million rubles was spent on educating the Red Army soldiers in a number of different ways.⁶² The department was also in charge of organising and

instructing the various cultural organs, operating in the Red Army at the time, e.g. the theatres, sport societies, libraries, etc.⁶³

The Literary-publications department was in charge of publishing and distributing the various journals, brochures, posters, etc.⁶⁴ The last department listed-the Inspectorate-was charged with "centralising and systematising political work in the armies."⁶⁵ What this meant precisely is impossible to say-indeed, the relevant section of the report stated that the latter department was so new that its precise functions still awaited further definition.⁶⁶ Given the title of the department, it would be logical to assume that it generally conducted an examination of political work being undertaken in the Red Army. If the latter was the case, it certainly would be an important department of PUR and further identification of the precise nature of its functions, as well as identifying the personnel involved, would be beneficial to the work of this thesis.

It is possible to identify some of the people who were involved in the various sections and sub-sections of PUR, at this time. Although, on saying that, it is also the case that very little actual biographical information is available on any of the names listed below. In no particular order, the Chief of PUR's Press bureau(April 1920)was B.Samsonov;⁶⁶ Deputy-Chief of PUR's Political

department(April 1920)was N.Ruzer-Nirova.⁶⁷ As regards the library activity of PUR, one name that seems to come up with a great degree of regularity is Evg.Khlebtsevich- his name first appears in such a context in March 1920.⁶⁸ Other names associated with various sections and departments of PUR include O.D.Kameneva (sister of Trotsky, wife of L.B.Kamenev), chief of the Inspector-Information department (May 1920)⁶⁹; chief of the information section, also at the same time, was Z.M.Kossakovsky⁷⁰; by April 1920, Vl.Faydysh was chief of PUR's Education department⁷¹; by August 1920, chief of the agitation and propaganda department was Suzdaltseva, a person who we have already come across in the previous chapter.⁷² Chief of supplies at this time was a man called Krasinsk⁷³; by December 1920, Deputy-Chief of PUR's Political-education department was Khassis.⁷⁴ In a collection of documents, devoted to analysing political work in the Red Army during the Civil War, a number of other names crop up, as regards PUR's internal organisational structure, therefore, we find that, In April 1920, associated with PUR's administration department was a chap named Lotsmanov⁷⁵; the Deputy-Chief of PUR's literary-publications department(October 1920)was Milman. Unfortunately, no other information is presently available on the overwhelming majority of the people listed and it can only be hoped that such a

situation will be rectified in the not too distant future.

A number of commissions were established under PUR, in 1920, which again added to the overall organisational structure of PUR, as well as increasing its remit and influence. One of these commissions is only known by the following single reference to its existence:

in May 1920, in order to control the agitational-propaganda work both on the front and in the rear, the CC of the RCP(B) created, under the control of PUR, a special commission, the composition of which contained Yu.Yu.Markhlevsky, P.M.Kerzhentsev and others.⁷⁷

Exactly, what work the commission did carry out is impossible to say presently. Was the commission in charge of all agitational-propaganda work to be carried out on the front and in the rear? If so, then this commission would have been a very important organ, well-worth detailed examination. Unfortunately, there simply is not enough information available to examine the work of the commission, even in a perfunctory way. The identification of a couple of the commission's staff does not help the situation too much either, as neither of the two men would appear to have played a particularly important role in the work of the Red Army's political apparatus earlier.⁷⁸

As previously noted, the main work of PUR's Educational department was the liquidation of illiteracy. In order to increase the department's capabilities in that area, on the 22nd July 1920, by order of PUR, the Central

Commission for the Liquidation of Illiteracy in the Red Army was created.⁷⁹ Apparently, the main tasks of the latter were:

providing the Red Army with school workers, the necessary teaching books and the creation and control of the work of the local commissions and other local organs for the liquidation of illiteracy.⁸⁰

The decrees of the commission were to be approved by the Chief of PUR himself and were then automatically made compulsory for all the other organs, involved in the campaign to wipe out illiteracy from both the Red Army and the Red Fleet.⁸¹

Thus, by September 1920, PUR's organisational structure was, arguably, in need of some further clarification. PUR was now in charge of a whole range of political and cultural-educational activities in the Red Army—from conducting propaganda campaigns amongst Polish prisoners of war to publishing leaflets on how to combat the tank menace! Hence, in September 1920, by order of RVSR, a set of regulations ("polozheniya") was issued which discussed both the organisation of PUR and its overall tasks.⁸² Although these regulations were published towards the end of PUR's Civil War career, so to speak, nevertheless, they were an important document and will be analysed here in detail. The regulations consisted of a series of general statements, as well as of a more specific set of statements, concerning the duties

of a number of the departments that went to make up PUR.⁸³ Unfortunately, unlike the order of May 1919, there is no indication in the new set of regulations, whether the overall staff of PUR actually increased or not. There is also no information available from other sources either on this point, so this particular question will have to be left open for the time being.

The opening series of statements in the regulation consist of a number of points concerning PUR's general structure and responsibilities:

1. The Political Administration is in control of all political-educational and agitational work in the Red Army and Fleet. This is carried out on the basis of the instructions and orders of the Revolutionary Military Soviet of the Republic and, also, the decrees of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party. With this in mind, the Political Administration:

- a) works out and issues orders, circulars and instructions, directing political-educational and agitational work;
- b) publishes books, papers, magazines...and supplies them to the relevant institutions and units;
- c) instructs the political departments of the fronts, armies, divisions, the okrug political-educational administrations and other political-educational organisations in the Army and Fleet, as regards the conduct of political-educational work...and controls their activity in this area;
- d) trains a cadre of instructors and agitators for the conduct of political-educational and agitational work;
- e) convenes congresses on matters of a general and political nature, concerning political-educational and agitational work, and also takes part in meetings, conferences on matters of political education;
- f) assesses all the political-educational work and, with this purpose in mind, publishes special bulletins and tables;
- g) creates museums and exhibitions;
- h) appoints and approves the military commissars, operating in the military units, administrations and institutions, subordinate to it.⁸⁴

Thus, judging by the above, it can be shown that PUR had a very broad remit for the control and conduct of all forms of political-educational work in the Red Army, at this time. The work is spelt out in clear, unequivocal terms and so is the nature of the relationship between PUR and the CC and RVSR. The next part of the regulations, in actual fact, went on to discuss the appointment of PUR's top personnel, including its Chief:

2. The Chief of PUR is appointed by the Revolutionary Military Soviet of the Republic and enjoys the rights of a Chief of a main administration; in an administrative sense, he is subordinate to the Revolutionary Military Soviet of the Republic and, in all actions, is directed by both the orders of the Revolutionary Military Soviet of the Republic and the decrees of the CC of the Russian Communist Party.

3. The Deputy-Chief of the Political Administration is appointed by order of the Revolutionary Military Soviet of the Republic.

4. The chiefs of the departments of the Political Administration are selected by the Chief of PUR and appointed by order of the Revolutionary Military Soviet of the Republic.⁸⁵

There are a number of interesting points worth examining in this particular section. For instance, the phrase about the Chief of PUR enjoying the same rights as a chief of a "main administration" would seem to imply that the decision to create a political administration in May 1919, instead of allowing the political department to operate, had some significance in terms of status. That the word, "administration" implies something bigger, or more powerful, than the word "department". After all, the

only other main administration that comes to mind is the GPU, created in 1922. It would also appear to be the case that the people who drew up these regulations had no doubts about the relationship of the CC and RVSR to PUR, i.e. that they could not see any potential conflict of interest arising. However, it still does not answer the question as regards the dominance of the two organs to PUR, in other words, did PUR have to obey the demands of the CC or RVSR more? If PUR was the political organ for the Red Army, one would assume that it would owe its allegiance more to the Party's supreme political organ, rather than the military organ. The next point in the regulations discussed the structure of PUR:

5. The Political Administration consists of the following departments: administration, inspectorate-information, agitational-educational, literary-publications and supplies.⁸⁶

The next part of the regulations then went on to discuss the nature and functions of each of the departments in turn. Thus, the administration department consisted of a chancellery ("kantseleriya"), mobilisation-registration section, cipher section, a commandant's office and, finally, a printing press.⁸⁷ Amongst its functions were editing the orders of PUR's Chief and ensuring that they were carried out on time; matters in relation to the placement and appointment of political workers and commissars in the Red Army and Fleet; sending coded

telegrams; rendering medical assistance, etc.⁸⁸

The inspectorate-information department consisted of two sections-the inspectorate and the information sections. Basically, the functions of the two sections were to respectively inspect political work being conducted in the regions and then compile and publish information bulletins on the latter.⁸⁹

The agitation-education department consisted of the following sections-general, library, school, artistic, club, agitational and, finally, propaganda.⁹⁰ Thus, it would appear that the latter department, judging by the list of sections, had a very broad remit and would appear to have been in charge of virtually all the political and cultural-educational work in the Red Army. In order to help the work of the department, the department also had under its control a symphony orchestra, a cinema-train and a museum.⁹¹

The literary-publications' department consisted of three sections and a press bureau.⁹² The sections were general, editorial and technical.⁹³ The department was in charge of editing all agitational and educational publications for use in the Red Army. It was also in charge of of the publication activity of the local Army organs, as well as exercising political control over the activity of the central military publishing organs. In connection with this, it should be remembered that this

effectively meant that PUR had control over what went in the various text books for the military schools and the command courses.⁹⁴

The final department listed in the regulations is the supply department. The department was made up of a financial part, further sub-divided into a number of sections(warehouse, distribution, economic, etc), as well as a bureau of commissioners.⁹⁵ These commissioners would appear to have been in charge on how the money was spent and the materials used.⁹⁶ As the regulations stated:

13. The supply department directs: a)the organisation and work of the departments of supply both at the front and in the rear and subordinate to the Political Administration; b)works out estimates for the Political Administration and examines the estimates presented to the former, by the corresponding political departments and administrations of the fronts and okrug military districts...; c)compile and put in to effect a plan of purchases for cultural-educational(cinematographic, theatrical-artistic, book, text book and musical)property.⁹⁷

However, despite the importance of the September 1920 set of regulations, the reorganisation of the Red Army's main political organ was still not complete. Within a month of the publication of the September 1920 regulations, PUR was to undergo a still more significant reorganisation, with the decision to create a combined political-educational and agitational-educational apparatus for both the Soviet Republic and the Red Army in one organ-the Main Political-Educational Committee of the Republic was born.⁹⁸ This merger of two organs to create

a super, combined organ for the needs of both the Red Army and the Soviet Republic took effect only after PUR had completed a tremendous amount of work during 1919-1920 and, since it comes at the end of the Civil war period, it will be examined once the work of PUR itself has been examined and will not be analysed here in detail.

Thus, in looking back at PUR's organisational structure, one is able to discern a number of distinct differences between what had existed under VBVK and what was put into effect under PUR. To all intents and purposes, it would appear to have been a considerably larger organ than VBVK had ever been and with an increase in size also went with it an increase in the overall responsibilities of the organ. Its relationship with both RVSR and the CC would also appear to have caused little problems, although there are still a number of unanswered questions in this area, not least of which was a definite answer to the question of which of the two organs took precedence over PUR? The RVSR or the CC? The fact that Smilga was both a member of the CC and RVSR would seem to have placed PUR in a very unique position over all other State and Party organs, however, as will be shown later, this too was not without drawbacks. If the success of the organ needed only an improvement in the organisational structure, then PUR would appear to have been adequately equipped; however, as will be shown, despite the

organisational overhaul, PUR was still to face a number of problems that had beset VBVK throughout its year-long existence. One problem which would appear not to have much bothered VBVK, but certainly created a degree of trouble for PUR was the problem of leadership of the organ itself and it is to that we now turn.

NOTES(1):-

1. "Partiino-politicheskaya rabota v Krasnoi Armii. Mart 1919-1920 gg. Dokumenty." M.1964, vol.2, p.40.
2. See previous section, p.
3. "Partiino-politicheskaya rabota...", vol.2, p.40.
4. "Politrabotnik," No.10-11, M.1922, p.38.
5. "Direktivy komandovaniya frontov Krasnoi Armii(1917-1922 gg). Sbornik dokumentov v 4-kh tomakh." Vol.4, M.1978, p.529.
6. See the relevant section on personnel.
7. "Sbornik sekretnykh prikazov R.V.S.R. za 1919 g." M.1919, order No.912.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Vl.Faydysh, "Pol'torgany i ikh rabota v grazhdanskoi voiny", "Politrabotnik", No.4-5, M.1924, p.31.
12. "Sbornik sekretnykh...", 1919, order No.912.
13. Ibid.
14. "The Modern Encyclopaedia of Russian and Soviet History." Ed. by J.L.Wieczynski. Vol.16, p. L.1980.
15. Wieczynski, "The Modern...", vol.16, p.64
16. Ibid., p.65
17. Ibid., p.64
18. Ibid., p.65
19. Ibid., p.64
20. "Sbornik sekretnykh...", 1919, order No.912.
21. "Sbornik sekretnykh...", 1919, order No.912.
22. Ibid.

NOTES(2):-

- 23." Izvestiya Narodnogo Komissariat po Voennym Delam."
21.6.1919.
- 24.L.D.Trotsky, "On the Left Opposition". New York, 1976,
p.
- 25.Trotsky, ibid.,
- 26.George Saunders, "SAMIZDAT. Voices of the Soviet
opposition." New York, 1974, p.105.
- 27.Saunders, "SAMIZDAT...", p.105.
28. Ibid.
- 29."Sbornik sekretnykh...", 1919, order No.912.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
- 32."Izvestiya Narodnogo...", 13.12.1919.
- 33.See the relevant entry in the biographical section.
34. Ibid.
- 35."Sbornik sekretnykh...", 1919, order No.912.
- 36.Faydysh, "Politorgany i ikh...", "Politrabotnik", 1924,
p.30.
- 37."Izvestiya Narodnogo...", 13.10.1918.
- 38."Sbornik sekretnykh...", 1919, order No.912.
- 39.Ch.Rakovsky, "Dusha pobedy. K istorii Krasnoi Armii."
'Kommunisticheskii Internatsional', M.1920, No.13, p.2502.
- 40."Politrabotnik", No.10-11, M.1922, p.38.
41. According to one recent source, Smilga's appointment
as Chief of the reformed Political department of RVSR was
made as early as 25th March 1919("Politorgany...", M.1984,
p.35). When the latter organ was recreated to become PUR,
Smilga was left in control.

NOTES(3):-

- 42.Br.A.Granat, "Deyateli Soiuza Sovetskikh Sotsialisticheskikh Respublik i Oktyabrskoi Revoliutsii(Avtobiografii i biografii)." M.1929, pt.3, p.64.
43. "Izvestiya Narodnogo...", 10.5.1919.
- 44.A.G.Beloborodov, "V dni borby", "Politrabotnik", M.1924, No.4-5, p.20.
- 45."Istoriya Kommunisticheskoi Partii Sovetskogo Soiuz." M.1968, vol.3, book 2, p.282.
- 46.P.Kuzmin, "Politorgany Krasnoi Armii v period grazhdanskoi voyny." 'Partiino-politicheskyy rabota v RKKA', No.5, M.1939, p.50.
- 47.S.S.Khromov, "Grazhdanskaya voyna i voennaya interventsia. Entsiklopediya." 1st ed. M.1983, p.465.
- 48.Khromov, ibid., p.465.
49. Ibid.
- 50.Yu.P.Petrov, "Stroitelstvo politorganov, partiinykh i komsomolskikh organizatsiy Armii i Flota." M.1968, p.81.
- 51.Petrov, ibid., p.81.
- 52."Politrabotnik", No.1, M.1920, pp.8-14.
53. Ibid., p.9.
54. Ibid.
55. Ibid.
56. "Politrabotnik", No.1, M.1920, pp.8-14.
57. Ibid., p.10.
58. Ibid.
59. Ibid.
60. Ibid., pp.10-11.
61. Ibid., p.11.

NOTES(4):-

62. "Politrabotnik", No.1, M.1920, pp.8-14.
63. Ibid., p.12.
64. Ibid.
65. Ibid.
66. Ibid., No.3, M.1920. p.13.
67. Ibid.
68. Ibid., No.2, M.1920, p.13.
69. Ibid., No.5, M.1920, p.11.
70. Ibid.
71. Ibid., p.12.
72. Ibid., p.16.
73. Ibid., No.9, M.1920, p.18.
74. Ibid., No.11, M.1920, p.16.
75. "Partiino-politicheskaya rabota...", vol.2, p.87.
76. Ibid. p.93.
77. "Partiino-politicheskaya rabota v Vooruzhenykh Silakh SSSR, 1918-1973 gg. Istoricheskii ocherk." M.1974, p.53.
78. See biographical section.
79. "Partiino-politicheskaya rabota...", vol.2, p.511.
80. Ibid.
81. Ibid.
82. Ibid., p.90.
83. Ibid., pp.90-92.
84. Ibid., pp.90-91.
85. Ibid., p.91.

NOTES(5):-

86. "Partiino-politicheskaya rabota...", vol.2, p.91.

87. Ibid.

88. Ibid., pp.91-92.

89. Ibid., p.92.

90. Ibid., p.92.

91. Ibid.

92. Ibid., p.93.

93. Ibid.

94. Ibid.

95. Ibid.

96. Ibid.

97. Ibid., pp.93-94.

98. "Dekrety Sovetskoi Vlasti." Vol.11, M.1983, pp.197-201.

CHAPTER THREE(SECTION TWO):-

THE LEADERSHIP OF THE POLITICAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE REVOLUTIONARY MILITARY SOVIET OF THE REPUBLIC(PUR)DURING THE CIVIL WAR(MAY 1919-JANUARY 1921).

As stated briefly in the last section, the actual leadership of PUR during the Civil War is an area of special interest. Unlike the leadership of VBVK, which can be identified throughout the organ's history as being headed by Yurenev and assisted by a number of deputies, PUR's leadership throughout the Civil War is a much more difficult matter to solve. Although, as stated earlier, Smilga was appointed in charge of the organ as early as May 1919, as will be shown below, there is a large body of evidence presently available which shows that, although Smilga was playing a very active role on the front during 1919-1921, his role in the actual day-to-day running of PUR would appear to have been less prominent. Not that the latter situation was entirely of his own making, but it should be conceded here and now that the Deputy-Chiefs of PUR, of whom there were quite a number, were probably just as important to the running of PUR and, in a number of cases, probably even more important, than the organ's nominal Chief. This short, but important section, will examine the evidence currently available and state who was

in charge of PUR and when they were in charge: in such a way, it is to be hoped that the reader will then have a much better idea, as regards the conditions that the organ itself had to endure throughout the length of the Civil War.

In 1924, on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the creation of PUR, a series of articles appeared, commemorating this event, in PUR's own political journal, "Politrabotnik".¹ The articles were written by a number of important military and political figures of the time, e.g. Trotsky, Frunze, Beloborodov, etc. Among the more interesting of the articles were two written by people, who had been among the organ's more prominent members of staff, so to speak, namely I.T.Smilga and A.G.Beloborodov.² In the case of one, he had been the organ's Chief throughout the Civil War (Smilga) and in the case of the other (Beloborodov), he had been, at one time, the Deputy-Chief of the organ. Therefore, in general, what both men had to write about their separate experiences of working at, or near, the top of PUR does make for interesting examination.

Smilga's article, in some respects, posed more questions than it answered but, in the following brief extract, Smilga stated how important was the role of the Deputy-Chief:

comrade Stalin was appointed a member of the Revolutionary Military Soviet of the Southern Front, I was appointed to

the South-Eastern Front. Work at the front took all of my energy, and that was why PUR was managed by a deputy. In turn, in this role, were: A.G.Beloborodov, L.P.Serebryakov, Ch.G.Rakovsky and V.I.Soloviev. I was forced to lead PUR sporadically, either from the fronts or during my stays in Moscow. It goes without saying that, in such a system, there were a lot of abnormalities concealed. Circumstances justified this, there was a lot of work, but far too few people.³

Why Smilga should make specific reference to Stalin's appointment to the Southern Front is difficult to fathom. Smilga's appointment to the South-Eastern Front took effect from the 1st October 1919 and lasted until 16th January 1920.⁴ This would seem to suggest that between May-October 1919, Smilga was able to work effectively in Moscow on PUR's behalf; unfortunately, there is an element of confusion in all of this which, on the basis of present evidence, is impossible to solve. In a speech Smilga made to the Second All-Russian Congress of Political Workers, held in Moscow in December 1920, in discussing his early days as the Chief of PUR, Smilga had the following to say:

in April 1919, the Central Committee of the RCP(B) appointed me Chief of PUR[a very curious mistake to make, given the fact that PUR did not formally come into being until May 1919-SM]. I brought to the work a number of comrades from the front. The work went well. But how long was I allowed to work in PUR? On the 26th May, I was sent to the Western Front, then to the South-Eastern Front, then the Caucasus Front, then back to the Western Front and eventually to the Southern-Wrangel Front. I was both a member of the Revolutionary Military Soviets and commander of the Front, as well as being Chief of the Political Administration.⁵

Although, as will be shown later, all of this can be

verified independently, the one key fact in the above statement which does throw considerable doubt on how long Smilga was able to work as PUR's effective Chief is his very first statement, concerning his need to leave for the Western Front in May 1919. The implication is that he was sent to the Western Front to serve on the latter's RMS; however, no other evidence testifying to that effect has been found. If one examines the RMS of the Western Front during May 1919, one does not find Smilga's name listed; indeed, it is not until 1920 that Smilga is listed as a member of the Western Front's RMS.⁶ If, however, Smilga was correct, then it would be true to say that almost right away, Smilga's military duties called him away from his post as PUR's Chief. That being the case, his earlier statement on the leadership of PUR would have to be reinforced still further-without the Deputy-Chiefs, PUR would have lacked any central figure at all, despite its perceived importance to the Bolshevik cause, in other words, PUR would have been effectively leaderless. Thus, in evaluating the precise nature of the leadership of PUR, at this time, it will be necessary to detail the appointments of the various Deputy-Chiefs, in order to be able to arrive at a much fuller picture of the working of PUR.

Unfortunately, in evaluating the available evidence, as regards identifying the Deputy-Chiefs of PUR, there is

a fair degree of confusion. However, for the first time anywhere, it is now possible to state with a great degree of accuracy who the Deputy-Chiefs of PUR were and when they served in the latter capacity. There are two lists, so to speak, of men who are identifiable as having served as PUR's Deputy-Chiefs; one of them was, in actual fact, produced by Smilga himself and it is to an examination of that list, in particular, that we will now turn.

In Smilga's 1924 anniversary article, already quoted from earlier, Smilga listed the men who had served as PUR's Deputy-Chiefs and the order in which they took over the post: it should always be remembered that, in Smilga's absence, these men were effectively in charge of the day-to-day running of PUR:

comrade Stalin was appointed a member of the Revvoensovet of the Southern Front, I[Smilga-SM] was appointed a member of the Revvoensovet of the South-Eastern Front [1st October 1919-SM]. Work at the front took up all my strength and that was why PUR was run by a deputy. In this post, in turn, were: A.G. Beloborodov, L.I. Serebryakov, Ch.G. Rakovsky and V.I. Soloviev.⁷

As will be shown below, this is a fairly accurate list, but it does not give any impression of how long each of the men were involved with PUR. The order in which the names appear also raises a number of questions—in a number of histories, either of the Party or the Soviet armed forces, various authors have actually changed the order of the names. For instance, in the relevant volume of the

authoritative history of the Party, the following list of names is to be found:

PUR was headed by the CC members, successively I.T.Smilga, L.P.Serebryakov, A.G.Beloborodov, Ch.G.Rakovsky.⁸

Thus, judging by the above list, PUR was run by Smilga, followed by Serebryakov, then Beloborodov and, finally, Rakovsky. There is also no mention, at all, of V.I.Soloviev. In another work which was published in the same year as the relevant volume of the Party's history, there is yet another list of names of people, identified as running PUR during the Civil War-this time, however, the historian concerned, Yu.P.Petrov, has stuck much more firmly to the original list of names quoted by Smilga himself:

the responsibilities of the Chief of PUR were carried out by the CC members A.G.Beloborodov, L.P.Serebryakov and Ch.G.Rakovsky.⁹

Thus, judging by all the various lists, there would appear to be an element of confusion, certainly surrounding the order of when the position was filled by the various men, but even regarding the identity of the men involved, there is also some doubt. However, it is true to say that, other than Smilga himself, the lists do share a number of commonly-identified figures, namely, Beloborodov, Rakovsky and Serebryakov. The only odd one out, so to speak, is V.I.Soloviev. However, judging by the available primary

source material, it is possible to largely clear up the issue of doubt, as regards the appointment of Soloviev to the post.

Judging by the relevant press reports of the period, the earliest identifiable Deputy-Chief of PUR was Serebryakov, and not Beloborodov, as identified by Smilga in his 1924 article. Order No.4, dated 23rd June 1919, is not only clearly signed by Serebryakov, but is signed bearing the title of "Chief of the political Administration of the Revvoensovet of the Republic".¹⁰ This seems to continue for quite some time. the last order both bearing this title and Serebryakov's signature appearing on 4th July 1919.¹¹ Unfortunately, after that, the picture becomes slightly more confusing-on two consecutive days(4th/5th July 1919)PUR's orders were signed by a properly-identified Deputy-Chief but, once again, it is not Beloborodov's signature that appeared next to the orders, but that of V.I.Soloviev.¹² Indeed, Beloborodov's signature is not to be found next to an order of PUR's until 10th July 1919.¹³ Then due to the relative frequency of his signature over the next three months, it would appear that under Beloborodov's leadership, PUR did begin to enjoy a degree of leadership stability. His orders appeared from July-September 1919 and covered a wide range of areas of responsibility, from inspecting the conduct of political work in the Red Air

Force¹⁴ to listing the officially approved abbreviations for telegrams being sent to PUR.¹⁵ In the anniversary collection of essays, devoted to the creation of PUR in 1919, as stated previously, Beloborodov contributed a brief essay, in which he made the following observation which, if nothing else, confirmed his time of office working in PUR:

my memories of working in PUR in 1919(July, August and September)cannot pretend to encompass all the work of PUR...according to my impressions, PUR, at that time, was an organ working, above all, to supply the fronts with that which was most valued, most necessary for victory-the Communist cadres.¹⁶

The first traceable order, bearing Rakovsky's signature, dates from 4th November 1919.¹⁷ It could well be the case that earlier orders bearing Rakovsky's signature do exist, simply that they were not reproduced in the relevant military newspapers of the period. Certainly, if one examines Rakovsky's autobiographical entry in the Soviet encyclopaedia, there would appear to be a strong indication to the effect that Rakovsky took over in the middle of September 1919, or shortly thereafter:

in the middle of september, I arrived in Moscow and, still retaining the post of Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the Ukraine, I was put at the head of the Political Administration of the Revolutionary Military Soviet of the Republic. I was the leader("rukovoditel")of this institution until January[1920-SM], in the difficult days of the Denikin, Kolchak and Yudenich offensives.¹⁸

Other than the latter entry, confirming his stewardship at PUR, Rakovsky's leadership of PUR is also further evidenced by his speech to the First All-Russian Congress of Political Workers, held in Moscow in December 1919, due to be discussed separately in another section.¹⁹ After his spell at PUR, Rakovsky, like all the other leading military and political figures of the period, was then sent to perform a variety of other political and military tasks—for instance, after the liberation of Kharkov (December 1919), Rakovsky was appointed Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic and a member of the RMS of the South-Western Front.²⁰ Rakovsky was appointed to the latter on 15th February 1920.²¹

In April 1920, PUR issued a programme of courses for political literacy, to be carried out by the Army political departments and the guberniya political-educational departments, bearing the signature of an apparently restored Deputy-Chief of PUR-Serebryakov.²² This would intimate that when, and if needs be, former Deputy-Chiefs were brought back into the apparatus to perhaps fill a gap in personnel at short notice. In all parts of the Republic's political and military apparatus, especially during the Civil War period, skilled people were at a premium and, just like a number of the other organs, no doubt PUR found it difficult to find personnel

for the top posts at short notice. If we examine the relevant part of Serebryakov's entry in Granat then, once again, we find another man who considered himself as being PUR's Chief:

from October 1917 onwards, Serebryakov worked in the capacity of a member of the praesidium of the Moscow soviet and secretary of the Party's oblast committee, then he was elected a member and secretary to the praesidium of VTsIK. In 1919-1920, he was a secretary to the CC RCP(B), then Chairman of the Southern Bureau of VTsSPS, a member of the Southern Front, Chief of PUR.²³

It must be assumed that the phrase at the end of this extract, i.e. "Chief of PUR", should not be taken too literally; simply, that Serebryakov performed the duties as if he was Chief of PUR. In actual fact, Serebryakov was to be formally made Chief of PUR in 1922 but, as yet, it was still too early.²⁴

Another figure who made an apparent return to the upper hierarchy of PUR's leadership structure was V.I.Soloviev. as shown earlier, Soloviev had been working as a Deputy-Chief of PUR as early as July 1919. After that appointment, however, he was then placed in charge of administrative affairs of the RMS of the Southern Front until October 1919.²⁵ After that, in January 1920, he was appointed Deputy-Chief of the Main Political Administration of the People's Commissariat of Communications and then, from August 1920, Deputy-Chief of PUR.²⁶ Within two months of his reappointment, he was

elected Chairman of a conference of military delegates at the All-Russian Party Conference, held in Moscow in September 1920.²⁷ In the same month as the latter conference, a meeting was held of the Higher Academic Military-Pedagogical Council, the membership of which included the Chief of PUR and the name alongside that particular title was Soloviev's, not Smilga's.²⁸ The final piece of evidence linking Soloviev with the leadership of PUR is, curiously enough, to be found in Smilga's brief resignation notice from the post of PUR's Chief, published in January 1921:

in accordance with the personal wishes of comrade Smilga, the latter is released from his post as Chief of the Political Administration of RVSR. The duties of Chief of PUR will be carried out by V.I.Soloviev.²⁹

Thus, for Soloviev to adopt such a post implies that he must have been Smilga's immediate Deputy-Chief and, since Smilga resigned, the position of leading PUR, at least temporarily, fell on Soloviev's shoulders. This is not usually reflected in Soviet histories of PUR: virtually in every other source, it is listed that Smilga ceased being Chief of PUR on the exact same day as S.I.Gusev took over.³⁰ There is never any indication that a transition took place involving Soloviev. Thus, throughout 1920, a number of orders can be found which bear Soloviev's signature and, alongside this, the title "Chief of PUR"³¹; it was not until June 1921 that an order was published

bearing Gusev's signature, as Chief of PUR.³² Obviously, it could easily have been the case that Gusev simply was not in a position to take up the post of PUR's Chief right away and, under such circumstances, Soloviev just held on to the post. But there was a transition period and that has not been noted before by other Soviet historians. Thus, summing up all the available evidence, as regards listing the exact leadership of PUR during 1919-1920, one can draw up the following running-order: beginning with Smilga's formal appointment in May 1919, the earliest Deputy-Chief was Serebryakov(May-July 1919); then Soloviev was briefly in charge in July 1919; Beloborodov then assumes the mantle, so to speak, taking over the post in July 1919 and apparently lasting until September of that year; judging by his own version of events, Rakovsky would then seem to have taken over in September 1919, or round about September 1919, and lasted until January 1920; there then would appear to be a gap, as no one has been concretely identified as taking over PUR in January-March 1920; in March-April 1920, Serebryakov returns to the fold; in August 1920, another reappointment took place when Soloviev was brought back. This was a significant appointment, as events were to unfold and leave Soloviev a temporary successor to Smilga, when the latter reigned in 1921. Soloviev was to retain this temporary status until mid-1921, when Gusev was

finally able to take up the post as PUR's Chief, a post that he apparently had been offered as early as January 1921.

Before leaving the leadership question entirely, one other point should be borne in mind here-in the persons of Rakovsky, Beloborodov and Serebryakov, you have three members of the Orgburo. Beloborodov was a member of the Orgburo at the same time that he was Deputy-Chief of PUR; then, for his part, Rakovsky gains a seat on the Orgburo in December 1919, at the same time replacing Beloborodov on the Orgburo³³ and, finally, when Serebryakov takes over, again, at PUR, he also manages to get a seat on the Orgburo.³⁴ Thus, there would certainly appear to be a link between PUR and the Orgburo, worthy of further examination, if only enough evidence were available.

Overall, then, it would appear that the leadership of PUR itself was a much more complicated affair than on first sight. Due to Smilga's constant military and political activity on the front, he simply was not able to work effectively as PUR's Chief. So, on that basis, the real leadership of PUR had to be entrusted to his Deputy-Chiefs who, as shown above, varied both in terms of length of stay at the post and the frequency in which they held the post, i.e. Serebryakov would appear to have held the post at least twice (in the same position is Soloviev), whereas Beloborodov and Rakovsky would appear to have held

it only once each. It was probably a reflection of the conditions that most political and military organs had to work under that PUR had to change its leadership so much. However, as can be shown by looking at each of their biographies, a lot of the Deputy-Chiefs of PUR were politically very able men and, compared to the past leadership of VBVK, PUR was in a much stronger position than VBVK ever was. As shown in the previous section, PUR enjoyed a unique status in that it was represented on both the CC and RVSR and this further reflected itself in its Deputy-Chiefs, who, as previously, stated were also very influential political figures in their own right. Further proof of the seriousness that the Party attached to PUR.

Thus, despite the problems that a regularly changing leadership brought, PUR was still staffed by many prominent political personalities and this, in itself, ensured that PUR was able to carry out a fairly intensive campaign of political and cultural-educational work amongst the Red Army soldiers. The nature and details of that campaign will form the basis of study for the rest of this particular chapter, beginning with an examination of the role of the military commissars under PUR, a role which witnessed a great deal of change since VBVK existed.

NOTES(1):-

1. "Politrabotnik", No.4-5, M.1924, pp.3-34.
2. Ibid., pp.9-11; pp.19-20.
3. Ibid., p.10.
4. "Direktivy komandovaniya frontov Krasnoi Armii(1917-1922 gg.) Sbornik dokumentov v 4-kh tomakh." Vol.4, M.1978, p.532.
5. "Politrabotnik", No.1, M.1921, p.1.
6. "Direktivy komandovaniya...", vol.4, pp.529-530.
7. "Politrabotnik", No.4-5, M.1924, p.10.
8. "Istoriya Kommunisticheskoi partii Sovetskogo Soiuza." Vol.3, book 2, M.1968, p.278.
9. Yu.P.Petrov, "Stroitelstvo politorganov, partiinykh i komsomolskikh organizatsiy Armii i Flota." M.1968, p.81.
10. "Izvestiya Narodnogo Komissariata po Voennym Delam." 23.6.1919.
11. Ibid., 4.7.1919.
12. Ibid., 5.7.1919.
13. Ibid., 13.7.1919.
14. Ibid., 14.7.1919.
15. Ibid., 15.7.1919.
16. A.G.Beloborodov, "V dni borby", 'Politrabotnik', No.4-5, M.1924, pp.19-20.
17. "Izvestiya Narodnogo...", 4.11.1919.
18. Br.Granat et al, "Deyateli Soiuza Sovetskikh Sotsialisticheskikh Respublik i Oktyabrskoi Revoliuytsii. (Avtografii i biografii)." M.1929, pt.3, p.186.
19. "Politrabotnik", No.1, M.1920, pp.3-4.
20. Granat et al, ibid., pt.3, p.186.
21. "Direktivy komandovaniya...", vol.4, p.533.

NOTES(2):-

22. "Politrabotnik", No.3, M.1920, pp.9-11.
23. Granat et al, ibid., pt.3, p.44.
24. "Partiino-politicheskaya rabota v Krasnoi Armii. Dokumenty. 1921-1929 gg." M.1981, p.568.
25. S.S.Khromov, "Grazhdanskaya voina i voennaya interventsia. Entsiklopediya." 1st ed., M.1983, p.555.
26. Khromov, ibid., M.1983, p.555.
27. "Politrabotnik", No.9, M.1920, p.14.
28. "Voennoe znanie", No.7-8, M.1920, p.6.
29. "Politrabotnik", No.1, M.1921, p.32.
30. Khromov, ibid., M.1983, p.465.
31. "Politrabotnik", No.2, M.1921, p.4; No.3, M.1921, p.22; No.4-5, M.1921, p.45.
32. "Partiino-politicheskaya rabota...", M.1981, pp.22-23.
33. Robert Service, "The Bolshevik Party in Revolution. A study in organisational change, 1917-1923." London, 1979, p.125.
34. Ibid., p.125.

CHAPTER THREE(SECTION THREE):-

THE POLITICAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE REVOLUTIONARY MILITARY SOVIET OF THE REPUBLIC AND THE WORK OF THE MILITARY COMMISSARS (MAY 1919-DECEMBER 1920).

Throughout the end of 1919-beginning of 1920, a debate arose both in the ranks of the Red Army and the Party, concerning the role of the military commissar in the Red Army. Given the growing importance of the political departments and the increasing confidence in the abilities of the military specialists, the role of the military commissar, as previously understood and interpreted, was on the verge of quite a significant change, not long after the actual creation of PUR in May 1919. The two events were, by no means, unconnected.

The formal Chief of PUR, Smilga, was one of the leading participants in the debate, as will be detailed below, despite being the nominally most important figure in the Red Army's political apparatus. He became one of the leading advocates of the view that the commissarial system, as it had previously existed, should be revamped and altered to suit the changing conditions and demands of the Red Army. In overall terms, despite the involvement of people like Smilga and Trotsky, the debate itself has

received comparatively little attention from Western scholars, although there have been a number of references to the debate in a few works.¹ The situation is virtually the same in Soviet accounts of the Civil War and/or the Red Army. It has been virtually totally ignored by Soviet historians for some 60-70 years. Therefore, in compiling the following section, the material used has been virtually culled from all the various records of the debate itself, dating from 1919-1920. Thus, this section, it is hoped, will add once again to our knowledge of how the political apparatus of the Red Army further developed under PUR and how it differed from that which had existed under VBVK.

When examining the work of the military commissars in 1919-1920, it is evident that some change must have occurred simply because, as compared to the previous period when VBVK operated, there is a distinct lack of any evidence concerning either the work, or the relationship, between the military commissars and the other parts of the Red Army's political apparatus. Potentially, at least, anyway, there are a number of explanations for this unusual state of affairs-firstly, that the political apparatus was working so smoothly that there was no need for PUR, or any of the other relevant state organs, to interfere in the operation of the Red Army's political apparatus or, secondly and, given the conditions of the

time, more likely, that the apparatus was being carefully examined from the top and, so to speak, it was a question of the calm before the storm. Given that the Red Army's political apparatus was going through a fair degree of significant change, thanks to the demands of the 8th Party Congress, it is more likely that the political apparatus was still being evaluated and, certainly, one of the parts that needed evaluation was the role of the military commissars. A slight indication that the role of the military commissars was on the verge of being reappraised was contained in an order of RVSR, dated 7th August 1919:

Bearing in mind that many Communists from the ranks of the military specialists, both on the front and in the rear, are carrying out the responsibilities of the military commissars, the Revolutionary Military Soviet of the Republic decrees:

Taking into account the significant lack, in the armies, of command personnel, especially in the numbers of Red commanders, [it has been decided-SM) to immediately appoint Communist military specialists to the corresponding command positions, thereby not appointing such people as commissars in the future.²

Thus, there is a distinct hint in this order that, even as far as RVSR was concerned, the work and position of the commissars had to undergo some revision, given both changing circumstances and the distinct lack of the sufficient number of Red Army commanders.

Ten days after the publication of the latter order, the CC issued a circular to all Party organisations, concerning the removal and transfer of military commissars

to other posts.³ Judging by the content of the circular, it would appear that a number of local Party organisations were taking the law into their hands, so to speak, and transferring a number of military commissars to a variety of other posts.⁴ This being the case, it would appear that in the localities, the perception of the role of the commissars had changed to such an extent that a number of local Party organs certainly thought it worthwhile to transfer a number of the military commissars to other positions. Thus, although the evidence is small, it certainly would appear that the examination of the role of the military commissars was gathering apace.

(i) Smilga and Trotsky on the role of the military commissars(February 1919-March 1920)

In examining the debate on the role of the military commissars in 1919-1920, the two key figures in the debate are Smilga and Trotsky. Both in terms of what they said and wrote, as well as their important positions in the Red Army's political and military establishment, they were indeed very prominent figures in the debate. This special section will hopefully provide the reader with all the necessary information, in order to better understand what

was, in actual fact, being proposed at this time, by people like Smilga and Trotsky. In assessing their views on the topic, however, it will be necessary briefly to look back at a number of their utterances on the matter before the actual creation of PUR in May 1919. This will help us to appreciate what the content of the debate was in the months following the creation of PUR. Thus, on the eve of the 8th Party Congress, Smilga, then serving on the RMS of the Eastern Front, wrote the following in February 1919:

it is not a matter for the Party Congress to decide on concrete forms for the administration of the troops. But the Congress must say that the reconstruction of the army on the basis of one-man command is our primary goal.⁵

This clear and unambiguous statement on the importance of one-man command in the Red Army would certainly seem to have been an unusual one to make, especially from the future Chief of PUR itself. However, it received further support from another prominent figure of the Red Army's establishment at the time, namely, Trotsky himself. In an order that Trotsky issued not long after Smilga's statement, Trotsky stated the following:

commissars play a tremendous role in the construction of our army. It can be said with complete confidence that we should not have had an army capable of fighting, had it not been for the heroic, self-sacrificing work of the commissars. At the same time, it is clear that the institution of the commissars is not a permanent institution, but has arisen from the transitional character of the present epoch in the construction of the army...all the work that has been done in building the army has prepared conditions which will lead, sooner or

later, to the establishment of complete one-man management in the sphere of administration and command.⁶

That Smilga felt very strongly on the matter was further evidenced by the fact that, again on the eve of the Party Congress, Smilga had a brochure published, arguing that it was already time for the liquidation of the commissarial element from the Red Army, that it was time to create a new type of military-political figure, by transferring a number of technical and administrative functions to the military commissars.⁷ At the 8th Party Congress, Smilga's views were far from being endorsed by the other delegates-Sokolnikov who, as stated earlier, was the main speaker at the Congress on the military question, dubbed Smilga's views as "premature"⁸ and, for his part, the main speaker for the "military opposition", Smirnov, wanted the powers of the military commissars increased, not decreased.⁹ In brief, before the storm broke forth in December 1919, the clouds had already begun to roll in-Smilga and Trotsky, as briefly described above, had already expressed their opinions on the temporary nature of the institution of the military commissars and the need for change. Indeed, Smilga's opposition to the continued role of the military commissars without change, has prompted one British historian to write of Smilga's appointment as PUR's Chief in May 1919 the following:

the appointment of so stout a champion of the military specialists as Smilga as the first head of PUR was

significant of a determination to put the claims of military efficiency above those of the Party doctrinaires.¹⁰

According to a speech that Smilga made in December 1919 to the First All-Russian Congress of Political Workers, following the 8th Party Congress, it would appear that, although no less a body than the CC itself was put in charge of drawing up a series of instructions on the role of the military commissars, not even the CC was equal to the task:

if we ask one of the military workers here[i.e.attending the Congress-SM]who a commissar is, what are his duties and rights, we will not receive a distinct reply, in spite of the fact that the 8th Congress of our Party instructed the Central Committee to work out a distinct series of statutes on the commissars. Even to this day, the decision of the Congress has not been carried out and is not being carried out, not because someone has sabotaged the work, but because trying to carry it out is exceptionally difficult, more so because the institution[of military commissars-SM], by its essence, is a temporary institution.¹¹

Furthermore, just after that particularly comment, Smilga went on to state how much effort he himself had personally put into attempting to resolve this dilemma:

comrades, I personally have spent a lot of time thinking over this question and, more than once, have attempted to write such a series of statutes but, other than a few general and useless proposals, have not succeeded. I think that here the blame does not lies with me; it is obvious that now, in general, it is not possible to adequately write a series of statutes on the commissars.¹²

Thus, there would certainly be strong indication from

both these statements that even such a body as the CC itself found the task of writing out a general, useful series of instructions on the rights and duties of the commissars in the units far too difficult to tackle. Given the presence of both Smilga and Trotsky on the CC, it can be inferred from this failure that both men were more than obviously aware of the CC'S failure in this area and, by their demands for a re-examination of the role of the military commissars in the Red Army were attempting to solve a problem, which had even been too difficult for the CC to solve.

At the First All-Russian Congress of Political Workers in December 1919, Smilga's views were further supported by his then Deputy-Chief, Rakovsky, who, in his speech to the Congress, stated the following:

the institution of the military commissars, having played an important role in the Civil War has, at the same time, great inadequacies. Although formally it is not meant to interfere in operational matters...it introduces splits, disperses strength and wastes time. Consequently, the idea which has been expressed about the introduction of one-man control has met with great sympathy from the delegates.¹³

If Rakovsky's statement, concerning the support for Smilga's views on the introduction of one-man control, is correct, then it would appear that whereas the CC was unsure about what to do exactly with the military commissars, at least one section of the Red Army's military-political establishment had a good idea what to

do with them. If the institution of the military commissars was to be changed, however, the question now was what type of changes were envisaged? Needless to say, Smilga was ready with an answer:

I propose the following organisational structure for the administration and command of the troops. Instead of the Military soviets¹⁴, to establish the post of a 'special commissar'. To this commissar should be directly subordinated the political department, the special department¹⁵ and the revolutionary tribunal...Furthermore, I consider it possible to grant the commander the right to issue individual orders...and to begin, at the same time, the liquidation of the commissars in those administrations, departments and units, at the head of which are already experienced men. In essence, the commissars do nothing there. In fact, for a long time already, the military commissar has become an assistant and, in some units, even a deputy to his specialist. By this reform we will free a number of our comrades from unproductive work...we have forgotten that the institution of the military commissars was a child of the transition period, that new conditions are being and have been created, under which the existence of the commissars is far from obligatory.¹⁶

In commenting on this, Carr has stated that:

Smilga defended in everything but name, the conception of a regular army, and demanded 'the reorganisation of the Red Army on the principle of one-man command'. This was a return to the proposal for the suppression or subordination of the political commissars.¹⁷

Whilst Carr is correct to a certain extent, as can be shown by reference to the extracts quoted, Smilga did not envisage that the commissars would have no role to play in the future conduct of political or cultural-educational work in the Red Army. After all, under Smilga's proposals, it could easily be argued that his political

role could have been, in actual fact, enhanced, especially given the fact that Smilga wanted the political departments subordinated to the special commissars.

Smilga continued to press home the view that circumstances had changed to such an extent that his views were by no means too radical to adopt wholesale. He argued that circumstances had changed due to three main factors:

- 1) the number of former Tsarist officers who had proven themselves loyal to the regime was considerable;
- 2) the number of Red Army commanders graduating from the various command courses was increasing and, finally,
- 3) the number of political workers who, for a variety of reasons, had been working in the purely military sphere, was also not inconsiderable.¹⁸

As far as Smilga was concerned, all these steps meant that the Red Army had a reliable command staff, politically loyal to the regime. In fact, he even dubbed a new term for this politically loyal command staff, "commander-Communists".¹⁹ This must have seen to some delegates as too much wishful thinking because, having said that, Smilga then went on to allay the fears of some of the delegates, by emphasising the role and importance of the political departments in all of this:

the army will not be taken away from the influence of the Party...the political departments are growing and spreading. These organisations have a tremendous future.²⁰

On the same day that Smilga made the above speech, Trotsky delivered his report to the congress and, as might have been expected, in general terms, agreed with Smilga's observations. This was evident right from the very beginning of his speech, which began with the following opening sentence:

the matter is not about the simple elimination of the institution of the military commissars in the army, but as quickly as possible of the merging of the functions of the commissar and the commander.²¹

Thus, whilst the aim was approximately the same as Smilga's, Trotsky does seem to have placed more emphasis on the fusion of the two figures, a gradual process that would take a degree of time. Drawing on the past history of the commissars, Trotsky argued the following:

one cannot say that the institution of commissars has proved to be a guarantee against individual acts of betrayal and flight to the enemy camp. The establishment of the institution of commissars signified a political assurance: in so far as the mass of the Red Army men were utterly lacking in confidence in the command personnel, and in so far as the commissars acted as the intermediaries between the commanders and the mass of the Red Army men, the commissars served as sureties for the commanders. I presume that this period is now behind us. The mass of the Red Army men have now realised that we had to recruit the military specialists. The masses who have taken part in the battles and have been in difficult situations have ~~seen~~ the commanders at work, and have ~~seen~~ how some of them have died at their posts, whilst others ran away. Comrades, a colossal proportion of our command personnel have become casualties in battle and among them have been former officers. The Red Army men know this. And now the institution which served as a sort of screen for the commanders is no longer needed for that purpose. The army has become sufficiently consolidated.²²

Coupled with Smilga's previous argument that, due to a number of reasons, the Red Army now had a sufficiently large number of trustworthy command personnel, Trotsky further compounded the latter by his insistence that the previous duties of the commissars-i.e. watching over the military specialists for fear of betrayal or treachery-were now no longer relevant to the needs of either the Red Army or the men that they were supposed to serve. On the face of things, both men's arguments did look convincing. In one of the most famous analogies of the Civil War period, Trotsky then went on to compare the commissars to the scaffolding needed for the building of a house:

the institution of the commissars was like scaffolding, necessary for the construction of the Worker-Peasant's Red Army. The construction has been completed, it is now necessary to take away the scaffolding. But this must be done gradually, from the top, not from the bottom, in order that it does not cave in. It is necessary to begin with removing the commissars from the Supply departments. The Communists there have enough experience, in order to immediately take over these departments.²³

This gradual approach to the solution of the problem was further emphasised by Trotsky later on in his speech:

in any case, comrades, I ask you to believe that we are not indulging in any leaps where this problem is concerned. I am against issuing an order that where the commander is a Communist, the Communist commissar is to be removed. Such a decision would cause great embarrassment both to the commissars and to the specialists. What, for example, about those commanders who are neutral or who joined the Party only yesterday? Who is to decide whether or not they need to have commissars attached to them?²⁴

Thus, whilst both men wanted to see a move away from the system of dual command, as it had existed in the Red Army, both men did express views on how this was to be achieved which were, by no means, carbon copies of one another. Arguably, Trotsky's views on this matter were more gradual; Smilga looks like he wanted the change to occur a lot more quickly than Trotsky. Trotsky seems to have been more keen on the idea of fusing the two figures together, whereas Smilga seems to have been more keen on a proper delineation of the functions of the two figures, with a clear cut separation of political and military responsibilities, with the added possibility that the political role of the military commissars would be enhanced accordingly. It could well have been the case that, as stated by Fedotoff White, Trotsky did not want to radically alter the system too much, a system which had given a very good account of itself during the Civil War.²⁵ Unfortunately, however, it is presently impossible to state what the effects were of either the two speeches in any detail-no information has, as yet, been released which would make such a description possible. That their views must have had some impact goes without saying, on the basis that both men occupied very senior posts in the Red Army's political and military hierarchy. However, it is true to say that, as will be shown below, Smilga did not let the debate end there-certainly, through out the

early half of 1920, Smilga did continue to voice his opinion on the question of dual control.

In March 1920, Smilga published an article, again on the nature of the role of the military commissars, once again emphasising the difficulties in trying to assess the nature of the duties of the military commissars:

all attempts...to write a series of statutes met with no success, or, at least, every statute was too narrow, too inadequate to cover all the multisided activity of the military commissar. On paper, he is nothing but, in reality, he is everything.²⁶

Later on in the article, Smilga still insisted that it was possible to rid the army of a significant number of military commissars:

at the present time, the Red Army is in such a position that it can, in a whole number of areas of military work, do without the military commissar. The army has spontaneously reconstructed itself on the basis of one-man administration and command. Collegiality has died. But the military commissar will not die as long as the Civil War lasts...It is difficult to say, at present, what the content of the work of the commissar will be in the future.²⁷

In some respects, this statement of Smilga's seems to be an acceptance of the situation as it then existed in the Red Army, i.e. that, virtually regardless of what Smilga himself thought, the military commissars would be retained in the Red Army, fulfilling their indescribable duties, for as long as the Civil War lasted. Their rational use would just have to wait until the present

emergency had passed. Curiously enough, in the same issue of "Politrabotnik", one of the Chiefs of a Front political department-D.A.Furmanov-wrote in outline support of Smilga's stance, on the abolishment of a number of the military commissars. His article was entitled, "For and against.(On the problem of the future liquidation of the institution of the military commissars)."28 In his article, Furmanov pointed out the potential in abolishing the military commissars:

with the abolishment of the institution of the military commissars, we will achieve a huge economy in highly qualified Communist Party strength...if we give these thousands and thousands of the best Party workers to other areas of work, how this 'other' new work will be strengthened and develop!29

Possibly due to his experience of work at the front, Furmanov then proposed the following plan for the liquidation of the military commissars:

1)military commissars remain with the same rights and duties as before if they are attached to those military specialists who have still not earned the complete trust[of the military commissar-SM]by selfless loyalty to the cause of the revolution...2)administrative-economic, operational-military and observational functions are removed from those commissars, whose chiefs are experienced and particularly distinguished military specialists or members of the R.C.P.

In both of these cases, the military commissar is solely in charge of political-educational work.

3)Finally, the post of military commissar is completely liquidated, if the chiefs are R.C.P. members and can give full guarantees to the effect that they will be able to cope themselves, in terms of the overall leadership of the unit, both in military-technical and political-educational work.30

Obviously, there is no saying how well a plan like Furmanov's could have been put into effect on a nationwide scale, there is no evidence of it having been applied on the scale of even a front. Therefore, it is impossible to say, at present, exactly how such a plan would have affected the work of the Red Army's political apparatus at the front. Who would have made the final decisions as ~~regards~~ the removal of the commissars? The CC or PUR or even RVSR? Who would have checked all the relevant documents to ascertain which commanders could be safely left in charge of their units and who could not? Would the length of Party membership played any part in the final decision? Overall, it would appear that like Smilga's plan before, Furmanov's plan was left to gather dust.

Although it has not been possible to track down any direct reaction to either Smilga's or Trotsky's ideas on the subject, one of the Army political departments did make a number of comments on the general issue of the abolishment of the military commissars, at the time, and it is to that we now turn.

(ii) Practical reaction to the idea of abolishing the military commissars

The political department of 7th Army, at the same time that Furmanov wrote his article described above, published its response to the general debate on the future role of the military commissars. The relevant article of 7th Army makes a number of direct references to the deliberations of the First All-Russian Congress of Political Workers, at which both Smilga and Trotsky expressed their views on the subject, so it would appear that 7th Army was represented at the Congress. The relevant article is simply entitled, "on 'the liquidation of the commissars'" and began thus:

incomplete and not totally accurate information, circulating in the press about the debate at the all-Russian congress of political workers, on the problem of one-man administration in the army, has given rise to and continues to give rise to this day, to bewilderment amongst the political workers of 7th Army.³¹

As far as 7th Army's political department was concerned, the best way to rid the army of this bewilderment was to make a list of policy statements on the role of the military commissars in the Red Army:

- 1) the question of the swift and general elimination of the institution of military commissars is not being discussed by anyone;
- 2) what was discussed, and could only be discussed, was the gradual dying away of the institution by strengthening the cadres of the Communist command staff. Where conditions permit, it is possible not to appoint commissars, attached to the chiefs and the commander-Communists, by limiting the appointment of responsible Party organisers. However,

this should be done with great care, as the role of the commissarial staff in the Red Army is still very important;
3) the role and significance of the commissars remains as it has been in the past.³²

The latter point, in itself, almost seems to contradict the other two points-if it was possible not to appoint commissars, in a number of instances, then how could their role and significance have remain unchanged? However, regardless of that, it is interesting that the debate at the First All-Russian Congress of Political Workers had encouraged such a reaction from at least one Army political department. It could well have been the case that the other Army political departments also expressed similar views or, for that matter, views that supported Smilga's stance on the issue; unfortunately, it is simply not possible to gain access to the relevant primary source materials, at present.

(iii) Conclusions

What then seems to have happened is a virtual dying down of the debate, until it would appear that it disappeared from everyone's lips. Without access to the full record of, for example, the Second All-Russian Congress of Political Workers(December 1920), it is

impossible to say whether the issue was raised again and debated. True enough, a draft set of statutes on the rights of the commissars was produced but, judging by its content, it said nothing new or anything radically different from previous sets of such statutes.³³

Certainly, in his address to the Second All-Russian Congress of Political Workers, Smilga made no further reference to the debate.³⁴ This may seem curious but, given the fact that Smilga was to soon hand in his resignation, it could have been possible that he thought the battle was lost and decided simply not to broach the subject again. In the absence of any information, informed speculation is all that can be presently offered. Could it even have been the case that the overall debate on the role of the commissars and Smilga's resignation were related? After all, having been rebuffed on an issue that he felt so strongly, Smilga could have thought his position untenable within the organisation and decided to resign.

All that can be safely said is that after April 1920, the debate on the military commissars seems to have died down and the commissars would appear to have carried out their previous functions, as normal.

Overall, then, the debate on the role of the military commissars would appear to have been sparked off by a perception that their role had changed to such an extent

that they could no longer be left to carry out functions, the basis of which no longer seemed to be there. This would certainly appear to be the position that Smilga adopted, a man who, in some ways, one would have automatically expected to defend the rights of the Red Army's political establishment to the last. Judging by the available evidence, however, Smilga was a firm advocate of one-man command and argued that the functions of the commissars needed to be changed in order to reflect what had been happening at the front. As far as Smilga was concerned, there then existed in the Red Army an adequate command staff, who could cope with the necessary demands of the units, without the constant gaze of the commissars. For his part, Trotsky also argued that the commissarial system should change, but Trotsky seems to have preferred a much slower pace and, at the end of the day, would appear to have been reasonably contented with a system that had produced quite favourable results. As shown earlier, there was also an indication that both the CC and RVSR had taken note of the changing situation at the front and had partially reacted to it but, again without access to more information, it is impossible to analyse the role of either the CC or RVSR in any great detail.

What then happened is also difficult to ascertain. It is doubtful that both Smilga and Trotsky lost their

interest entirely in the debate, but after April 1920, no one seems to have picked up the torch and carried forward. No more articles, no more public pronouncements on the latter. Could there be more material waiting in the archives, which could throw some light on the matter? There could be but that is pure speculation. The debate could have died, simply because no one was interested anymore. Either way, the conclusion to the debate would appear to have been unsatisfactory, especially as regards what Smilga and Trotsky had wanted earlier.

As mentioned throughout this section, one of the most important events, as regards the work and development of the Red Army's political apparatus, took place in December 1919: namely, the opening of the First All-Russian Congress of Political Workers. Other than the debate on the military commissars, there was a whole range of matters discussed at this congress and it is to analysing the work of the congress that we now turn.

NOTES(1):-

1. There is a reference to the debate in E.H. Carr's, "Socialism in One Country, 1924-1926." Vol.2, London, 1959, pp.379-381 and also in Fedotoff White's "The growth of the Red Army", Mass., 1944, p.84.

2. "Partiino-politicheskaya rabota v Krasnoi Armii (mart 1919-1920 gg.)". Vol.2, M.1964, p.40.

3. Ibid., pp.40-41.

4. Ibid.

5. "Voennaya mysl", organ of the Revolutionary Military Soviet of the Eastern Front, No.2, February 1919, p.2.

6. L.D. Trotsky, "How the revolution armed. Volume two: The year 1919." New Park Publications, NY, 1979, pp.125-126.

7. This description of Smilga's pamphlet is taken from Sokolnikov's description of the content of the former in Sokolnikov's speech to the 8th Party Congress. (See "Vosmoiye sezd RKP(B). Mart 1919 goda. Protokoly." M.1959,

p.150).

8. Ibid., p.150.

9. Ibid.

10. Carr, "Socialism in one Country...", vol.2, p.379.

11. "Politrabotnik", No.1, M.1920, p.7.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid., p.4.

14. The term, "military soviet" refers to simply the revolutionary military soviets discussed earlier.

15. The "special departments" were departments of the Cheka, operating in the region of the front. (See S.S. Khromov, "Grazhdanskaya voyna i voennaya interventsia v SSSR. Entsiklopedia." M.1983, pp.136-137.

16. "Politrabotnik", No.1, M.1920, p.8.

17. Carr, "Socialism in One Country...", vol.2, p.379.

NOTES(2):-

18."Politrabotnik", No.1, M.1920, p.7.

19.Ibid., p.8.

20.Ibid.

21."Izvestiya Narodnogo Komissariata po Voennym Delam", 14/12/1919.

22.L.D.Trotsky, "How the revolution armed. Volume two:The year 1919." New Park Publications, NY, 1979, p.108.

23."Izvestiya...", 14/12/1919.

24.Trotsky, "How the revolution...", vol.2, p.108.

25.White, "The growth of...", p.85.

26."Politrabotnik", No.2, M.1920, p.2.

27.Ibid.

28.Ibid., pp.3-4.

29.Ibid., p.3.

30.Ibid., p.4.

31. "Boevaya pravda", organ of the political department of 7th Army. 24/1/1920.

32.Ibid.

33."Politrabotnik", No.1, M.1921, pp.18-19.

34.Ibid., p.2.

CHAPTER THREE(SECTION FOUR):-

THE POLITICAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE REVOLUTIONARY MILITARY SOVIET OF THE REPUBLIC AND THE WORK OF THE FIRST ALL-RUSSIAN CONGRESS OF POLITICAL WORKERS OF THE RED ARMY (DECEMBER 1919).

In examining the political and cultural-educational work of PUR in its first six months of existence, the best way to do this is to examine the various reports made on PUR's activity, presented at the First All-Russian Congress of Political Workers of the Red Army, held in Moscow in December 1919. This congress was important, not only in the fact that it allowed PUR the necessary forum from which to inform the assembled delegates about the progress of the political and cultural-educational work which was being undertaken in the Red Army, but also because at the congress itself, a number of very important people in the Red Army's political apparatus-most notably Smilga-made a number of very important contributions to the overall debate on the future conduct of political and cultural-educational work in the Red Army, at the time. Simply because Smilga was the Chief of PUR did not prevent him from expressing his disquiet about the way political work was being carried out in the Red Army or, as will be detailed later, criticising the CC itself for what he

considered its negligent attitude towards the political apparatus of the Red Army. As will be shown below, it also did not prevent his Deputy-Chief at the time, Rakovsky, also unleashing quite a determined assault on the way political work was being carried out by the political departments at the front. Of course, needless to say, the congress also provided a platform for the political departmental chiefs to criticise PUR, so all in all, the congress is more than worthy of a separate detailed section to itself.

Rakovsky made a number of opening remarks to the Congress delegates, and started off with the following declaratory statement:

from this congress, one can say that the Political administration of the Republic...with all its front, army, okrug, guberniya and other organs, has begun to exist.¹

This somewhat grandiose statement, especially judging by what Rakovsky was to say in the rest of his speech, would appear to have been a slight over-statement of the actual situation as it really existed then. The distinct implication that PUR was in charge of all political organs operating everywhere; indeed, technically, PUR was, but in its effective control of that apparatus, well, the reality was somewhat different. His opening remarks to the Congress also hinted at the dangers that the apparatus faced from the increasing bureaucratic trend that was

already creeping in to the Red Army's political apparatus:

the struggle with bureaucratism, threatening the political departments, should be our first priority...there is also no uniformity in structure or even the terms used in the political organs. In some units, the political organ is called the political department, in others the latter is called the political administration; in some units, the head of the latter is called a chief, in others he is called a manager. The statutes were also all different. There is not enough plannedness["planomernost"-SM] in the political structure of the Red Army.²

Thus, in these few opening remarks, Rakovsky almost in the same breath has stated that PUR is in control of a wide range of political organs, both at the front and in the rear, but that there is a growing bureaucratic threat to the political departments, emanating, one assumes, from inside the structures themselves. Somewhat ironically, he then reveals his own bureaucratic attitude with his own opinions on the need for uniformity not only as regards the structures of the political departments, but even as regards the very names used and adopted by the political departments and their staffs! After these opening remarks, the congress would then appear to have elected a praesidium, but its composition is not known.³

The next person to address the delegates was a former prominent member of VBVK, namely, V.D.Kasparova. Her new position within PUR's overall organisational structure is not listed but, judging what has already been written about her, it can be assumed that her position at the congress would have been as representative, if not

chief, of PUR's Educational department. Unfortunately, the report of her speech is just that, a very brief report. No full copy of her speech has been found. However, even so, a number of useful things can still be said about the general content of her speech to the Congress. The paraphrased copy of her speech that is available would appear to show that her speech was made up of a number of sections: a few general remarks on the overall importance of cultural-educational work to the military success of the Red Army; secondly, a number of statements on the history of PUR and its work and, finally, her speech would appear to have ended by her trying to warn the delegates present of the future problems facing PUR's education department.⁴ There is one fairly lengthy extract from her speech, discussing the most urgent problems facing the education department at the time, available for analysis:

the quickest possible liquidation of illiteracy amongst Red Army soldiers, the organisation of schools at an advanced level, the further organisation of courses, lectures, etc. A wholesale re-organisation of the library system...encouraging the growth of the Red Army choirs, drama circles...meeting the demands of the localities by sending out groups of professional artists.⁵

The overall activity of the political and cultural-educational apparatus of the Red Army prompted Kasparova to state that:

the hour is already near for the final triumph of light over darkness and that soon the flame of social revolution

will spread over the entire world, that the Russian Red Army will stand at the head of the risen world proletariat and on the ruins of the old order hoist the red banner of labour.⁶

Regardless of Kasparova's belief in the importance of the cultural-educational work being carried out in the Red Army, it would appear that a number of delegates did not share her belief in the success of the work being carried out-apparently, the main points of criticism of her speech were the following:

the main accusations were the following: the doctrinaire attitude emanating from the centre, its divorce from the political-educational workers in the field, the unresponsiveness of the educational apparatus to the demands of the front(its insufficient flexibility). The delegates of the conference also pointed out that, in reality, educational work in the army was conducted on modest means, that it was necessary not only to work out general instructions, but also to create favourable conditions for the work to be carried out.⁷

The complaints, however, did not stop there. Various delegates stated that there was an insufficient number of educational workers on the front; that political workers devoted more time and effort to administrative-economic tasks than cultural duties and that, finally, there existed a purely formal attitude by the librarian specialist to the ordinary Red Army soldier.⁸ Thus, putting all these complaints together, it would appear that Kasparova's rosy prediction about the triumph of light over darkness was, for a number of the delegates at the meeting, too much like pie in the sky. All of these

charges were serious and could not be easily ignored. But in defence of Kasparova, as will be shown later, the cultural-educational apparatus of the Red Army did play an important, if somewhat diversified role, in the life of the Red Army units and, although Kasparova perhaps had got too slightly carried away with her reference to the triumph of light over darkness, there was a justifiable element in what she said. In some respects, Kasparova, like PUR itself, was in a no-win situation, best summed up by one delegate (a person only identified by his surname, Potemkin) who, in a reaction to Kasparova's speech, stated the following:

if the centre controls the work, then the accusation is voiced that it is crushing local initiative; if the centre grants freedom to local self-activity, then the localities complain about isolation, the lack of guidelines, etc.⁹

In a nutshell, this particular delegate had very much hit the nail on the head. If PUR had sought much greater control over the political apparatus at the front, then the charges would have went up from the front that the centre was stifling local initiative, that it was attempting to subordinate too much to centralised control and yet, because the latter was not happening, the Congress heard criticism that there was a rift between PUR and the political apparatus at the front. Given the past criticism of VBVK, it would appear that the political apparatus had not advanced a great deal since the 8th

Party Congress but this, of course, would be untrue. But yet the same criticisms were being made, despite the large expansion in the duties and tasks of the new organ.

In Rakovsky's principal address to the Congress, on the activity of PUR in its first six months of existence, every detail of PUR's work was covered, as well as how much money was being spent on the various projects being carried out in the Red Army.¹⁰ The various statistics quoted in Rakovsky's address covered, as will be detailed, every aspect of political and cultural-educational activity being undertaken in the Red Army during 1919. Since there is so much statistical information contained in Rakovsky's report, a number of sub-sections will appear which will hopefully help to disseminate the necessary information in a much more compatible form. Thus, the first sub-section will analyse the relevant figures on the number of Communists and commissars in the Red Army at this time.

(i)The number of commissars and Communists in the Red Army(1919)

Rakovsky began his report to the Congress with a detailed assessment of the number of commissars and

Communists in the Red Army by the end of 1919. Although the figures would appear to be ~~correct~~, as regards the number of Communists in the Red Army, there would appear to have been some slight confusion about the exact number of commissars in the units. However, that will be cleared up here. The relevant passage of Rakovsky's report stated thus:

the number of commissars in the army, the rear units and institutions has reached 2,500. Of these, there are in the okrugs 12, in the guberniyas 56, in the uyezds 435. In the units: in the revvoensovety, there are 60, in the staffs and institutions, there are 2,000, in the military units, there are 3,120 (divisional, brigade, regimental, including artillery divisions and battalions, batteries attached to armoured trains). The figure does not include political leaders.¹¹

Obviously, if one adds up the number of commissars in the units (60+2,000+3,120), one arrives at a figure considerably more than the 2,500 listed in the opening of the paragraph (the figure, in actual fact, amounts to 5,180). This figure is one which one finds support from a unlikely source, in some respect—namely, a newspaper report of the self-same speech made by Rakovsky to the Congress! Although the relevant newspaper report is not a direct quote from Rakovsky's speech to the Congress, nevertheless, it would seem to cast a very strong doubt on Rakovsky's earlier statement. The relevant part of the newspaper report simply stated that, according to Rakovsky's report, "there were more than 5,000 commissars"

in the Red Army at the time.¹² This figure is further supported by research carried out by one Soviet historian of the subject some time back.¹³

Assuming, therefore, these figures to be correct, what must have happened is that someone has simply made a typing error in the republished version of Rakovsky's speech in the issue of "Politrabotnik". However, it is unusual that given the nature of the information released and its overall importance that the mistake was not publicised and then immediately rectified. It should be remembered that even if the figure calculated-5,180-is correct, it still does not represent the exact number of commissars in the entire Soviet Republic. After all, one still has to take account of the military districts. Rakovsky's figure of 2,500 commissars as representing the total number of commissars in the military districts would appear not to have been the subject of any misprint, therefore, if we accept it as being correct, it would be possible to state that by the end of 1919, serving in all posts in all parts of the Republic, as commissars, were some 7,680 men($2,500+5,180$). If we remember that the total for 1918 was 6,389 commissars in the Republic, then we can record an increase of just under 1,300 commissars in the whole year, in itself, a not unbelievable increase in the space of 12 months. It has to be emphasised, however, that the latter figure is purely speculative and

it could well be that the grand total of commissars in the Republic was more than that established here-the only way to determine the exact figure is to dig out the relevant archival sources.

There is less controversy surrounding the number of Communists in the Red Army towards the end of 1919. Rakovsky not only quoted the overall figure for the number of Communists and Communist Party sympathisers in the field army ("deistvyushchaya armiya") for October 1919, but also showed the relative strength of the Party on a front by front basis. Thus, by the 1st October 1919, the total figure for the number of Communists and Communist sympathisers in the field units numbered 61,681.¹⁴ This figure is then broken down on a front by front basis to reveal, amongst other things, that the most critical fronts in 1919 had the highest proportion of Communist Party members and sympathisers. Thus, in reverse order, so to speak, the lowest number of Party members and sympathisers was recorded on the Northern Front-the number there was only 2,043; on the Turkestan Front, the figure amounted to 8,911; the South-Eastern Front had only 9,840; the Western Front numbered 11,460 Communist Party members and sympathisers amongst its ranks; the second largest figure of all the fronts was the Southern Front-14,825 Communist Party members and sympathisers being recorded there but, the largest number of Communist Party members

and sympathisers on any of the fronts was recorded on the Eastern Front, the figure there being 14,962.¹⁵

If we place these figures alongside figures for the number of men under arms on each of the fronts, then it is possible to arrive at some idea of how significant a proportion of the Communist Party strength was on each of the fronts, relative to the actual number of soldiers on each of the fronts. Therefore, according to the relevant materials, on the Northern Front, which was made up almost entirely of 6th Army at the time, there were some 100,000 men on the front; on the Turkestan Front, there were some 340,000 soldiers; on the South-Eastern Front, there were some 317,000 soldiers; on the Western Front, the number of soldiers was 375,500; on the Southern Front, the figure was 360,000 and, finally, on the Eastern Front, the number of soldiers was 282,000 men.¹⁶ Thus, if we start to compare both sets of figures, we tend to find that the highest proportion of CP members and sympathisers was recorded where the perception of the military danger was greatest.

If we remember that the overall total of CP members and sympathisers in the Red Army was 61,681 and that the total number of Red Army soldiers listed above was 1,774,500, then, by dividing the two sets of figures together, we find that, on average, for every 1 CP member or sympathiser, there were 28.7 soldiers. If we use the

same sets of figures to calculate the relevant proportions of each of the fronts concerned, we find that the highest proportion of Party members and sympathisers to soldiers was recorded on the Eastern Front (the relevant figure being 1 CP member or CP sympathiser for every 18.8 soldiers). The other Fronts followed the pattern set below:

Southern Front-1 CP member or sympathiser per 24.2 soldiers;

Western Front, the figure was 1:32.7;

South-Eastern Front, the figure was 1:33.4;

Turkestan Front, the figure was 1:38.1 soldiers and, finally, on the Northern Front, the figure was 1:48.9 soldiers.

Thus, in 1919, where the fighting was concentrated mainly in the Eastern and Southern Fronts, that was where the highest proportion of CP members and sympathisers was to be found. The Party's mobilisations for the front were not in vain.

After detailing the figures, Rakovsky then went on to analyse PUR's budget for the last six months of 1919 and it is to that that the next section will concentrate on.

(ii) PUR's 1919 budget

In the last six months of 1919, i.e. the first period of PUR's activity, PUR had spent a total of 664,217,243 rubles: of this, 215,000,000 (approximately a third of the budget) was spent on fulfilling the needs of the Front political departments and a further 106,250,000 rubles spent on meeting the requirements of the okrug military districts.¹⁷ Thus, putting the two figures together, we can see that a little less than half of PUR's total budget was spent on the direct requirements of the Red Army's political apparatus, both that operating at the front and that operating in the rear. The money would appear to have been spent on paying the wages of the staff, agitators, organisation of literacy schools, etc.¹⁸ On top of the latter sums of money, a further 78 million rubles was to be spent on the creation and organisation of Red Army clubs, 6 million rubles was to be spent on the provision of mobile theatres for the needs of the Red Army, over 159 million rubles was to be spent on supplying the Red Army with libraries, books, papers, etc.¹⁹ The needs of the central apparatus, i.e. the wages of the staff working in Moscow for PUR amounted to 11 million rubles.²⁰ These were, it should be stressed fairly substantial amounts of money.

Although it is difficult to obtain budget information on many of the leading Party and state organs of the period, work carried out by one Western scholar, in particular, would seem to provide us with an opportunity to make some comparison of the figures quoted. For instance, Sheila Fitzpatrick in her mammoth work on the People's Commissariat of Education during 1917-1921, has produced a table for the budgetary expenditure of the People's Commissariat of Education, which would appear to show that the Commissariat's budgetary expenditure for July-December 1919 stood at 164,699,000 rubles.²¹ Thus, if the latter figure is accurate, it would appear that PUR's budgetary allocation was some 3 times more than that of the People's Commissariat of Education, an indication in itself of how importantly the Bolsheviks at the centre viewed the work of PUR in the Red Army.

(iii) PUR and the political workers sent to the front(1919)

The next main section in Rakovsky's report was a detailed examination of the political workers mobilised and sent out by PUR in 1919.²² according to Rakovsky, there existed a special section of PUR's agitation-

information department, which was specifically in charge of mobilising political workers for the front:

this section[namely, the mobilisation-distribution section-SM]is in charge of mobilisations, undertaken in accordance with the decrees of the Central Committee of the Party, allocating Party workers to the fronts and ensuring their rational use by the political organs in the army.²³

Rakovsky then went on to produce the relevant figures for the period just before the formal creation of PUR in May 1919 and ending in October 1919:

in April-290, in May-715, in June-335, in July-438, in August-431, in September-1,027, in October-5,427.²⁴

The final figure for October 1919 is further broken down to reveal how many workers were sent to each of the fronts:

to the Southern Front-2,167; to the South-Eastern Front-857; to the Eastern Front-209; to the Turkestan Front-227; to the Northern Front-7; to the Western Front-766; to the Reserve Army-566; to various other institutions-629.²⁵

Before leaving this particular set of figures entirely, it should be noted that the October total of the figures for the fronts, in actual fact, adds up to 5,428. The difference is slight, but there. However, a slightly more serious discrepancy arises in a republished report of PUR's activity for 1919-1920, which states that the actual number of political workers sent to the fronts in October

1919 was only 5,403.²⁶ Again, the difference is small but worth noting.

Looking through the individual figures, another discrepancy has to be brought to the reader's attention: in two sources, both involving the use of primary source material, the October 1919 figure for the number of political workers sent to the Southern Front is larger than the one given in Rakovsky's report. Thus, in the relevant pages of both an issue of "Istoricheskii arkhiv"(1959) and vol.2 of "Partiino-politicheskaya rabota..."(1964), the figure given is 2,411.²⁷

The difference between the two figures is 244 and, is by no means, what could be termed as being marginal.

Unfortunately, given that both figures are based on primary source material, it is impossible to explain such a big disparity between the two sets of figures-it could be simply an accounting mistake of some description.

(iv) PUR and the agitational literature sent to the front(1919)

By October 1919, PUR had also managed to send a vast amount of agitational literature to the front-papers, brochures, leaflets, etc. For instance, by this time,

681,700 copies of "Pravda" had been distributed to all the fronts, as well as a further 286,310 copies of the peasant newspaper, "Bednota".²⁸ Surprisingly, few copies of "Izvestiya VTsIK" were sent to the fronts at this time, just a little over 28,000 copies.²⁹ It should be remembered, though, that the various individual armies were producing their own local newspapers-by October 1919, it was estimated that the daily production run of all the army papers combined stood at 250,000 copies.³⁰ This was a considerable top up, so to speak, to the papers that PUR was able to send to the fronts. However, despite the large volume of papers being sent to the fronts, there was still a lot of room for improvement:in his report to the Congress, Rakovsky still was able to quote the fact that, in a number of units, there was an average of only one paper per sixty soldiers.³¹

The distribution network for the despatch of newspapers to the front was, in many ways, the main reason for the lack of newspapers at some areas of the front. In general, Rakovsky stated that there were two main reasons why some of the newspapers being sent by PUR were not reaching their intended destination:

- 1)the poor state of the railway network in some areas of the Republic;
- 2)at a number of stations, for weeks on end, bales of papers and poster literature are left unsent...due to the inadequacies of the despatch department of Tsentropechat.³²

Thus, it would appear that, despite the large volume of newspapers being produced and being sent to the front, there was still room for improvement. As will be shown later, the situation was to get better rather than the worse in the year ahead. Rakovsky, once having analysed the amount of literature being sent to the front, then proceeded to examine the work of a number of the main departments of PUR at the time-namely, the Cultural-educational and Literary-publications departments-and it is to these that we now turn.

(v)The work of PUR's Cultural-educational department in 1919

Rakovsky began his examination of the latter department by stating that the main task of the department, as a whole, was the liquidation of illiteracy from the ranks of the Red Army.³³ To achieve this aim, some 150,000,000 rubles had already been spent in the first half of 1919(i.e. when VBVK still existed for part of the period) and that credit, to the tune of a further 450,000,000 rubles had been allocated to the department for the second-half of 1919.³⁴ Rakovsky also stated that PUR had previously asked the Council of Labour and Defence

for 15,000-17,000 cultural workers, specifically to serve the needs of the Red Army but, due to the demands of the other ministries, government and Party organs, this figure had had to be scaled down to a more realistic 5,000 cultural workers.³⁵ Unfortunately, there is no indication of whether, or not, even such a reduced estimate was actually fulfilled.

Rakovsky then produced a table, showing the extent of the Red Army's cultural-educational apparatus by October 1919, (reproduced here at the end of the dissertation, as an appendix). Moving on from listing the facts behind the Red Army's cultural-educational apparatus, Rakovsky then went on to make a brief, but interesting statement, on the number of cultural-educational workers being sent from the centre, whose Party affiliation did not exist:

from the centre alone, for the organisation and instruction of the aforementioned cultural institutions, during this period[January-October 1919-SM]861 people were sent, of whom 25% were sent to the front (among those sent, only 132 were Communists).³⁶

Thus, although it was still fairly early, both in terms of the money spent and the people sent out to help organise the Red Army's cultural-educational apparatus, PUR's cultural-educational organ would appear to have laid a reasonably solid basis for the future conduct of the work to be carried out. As will be detailed in the next chapter, one of the most successful campaigns ever

undertaken during the Civil War was the Red Army's campaign to abolish illiteracy from amongst its ranks and, given what has just been written, it certainly would appear to be the case that PUR's cultural-educational department played an important role in the latter campaign.

(vi) The work of PUR's Literary-publications department in 1919

Moving on from the examination of the work of the cultural-educational department, Rakovsky then went on to analyse the work of the Literary-publications department. The latter was largely in charge of the production of magazines, brochures, posters, etc.³⁷ These were primarily for use among the Red Army soldiers but, as will be shown below, some of the publications were for agitational use among the soldiers of the various White armies. Once again, the production figures of a number of the journals were phenomenal-issue numbers 3-9 of the magazine, "Krasnoarmeets", were produced in a total run of over 1 million copies.³⁸ furthermore, 241,000 copies of various brochures were sent out to the Red Army, as well as 40,000 copies of a magazine for White Army soldiers,

called, "Svetoch".³⁹ Again, emphasising the importance that PUR attached to work amongst the White armies-up until October 1919, the department had produced and distributed well over a million leaflets specifically for agitational purposes amongst the White armies.⁴⁰ This would seem to reveal an important activity of PUR's work at the front which, for a variety of reasons, has not been the subject of much attention from scholars of the Civil War. PUR's commitment, revealed in the fact that it produced a large proportion of literature for agitational purposes behind the White lines, is an aspect of its work which, like a few others, has neither been properly analysed or examined. Unfortunately, it is not possible to detail the contents of such brochures or any of the issues of the relevant journal, but the mere fact that so much literature was produced for the Whites by PUR is interesting in itself and raises the very pertinent question of what exactly did PUR have to say to the White soldiers? Obviously, it can be surmised that part of the purpose of much of the literature being sent to the White armies was an attempt to persuade the White soldiers to desert and quit the ranks of the White armies altogether, but it could also have been possible that some of the literature being sent had a wider purpose than merely fulfilling the role of agitational-propaganda literature.

(vii) PUR and the work of the local political apparatus at the front(1919)

In his closing remarks to the Congress, Rakovsky analysed the nature of the relationship between PUR and the local political apparatus of the Red Army with, it has to be said, with a fair degree of candour and frankness, pointing out what he considered to be the main problem areas. Rakovsky began this particular area of his speech with the following terse statement:

the Political administration is still not up to the mark. I must tell you that we, much more than you, who are at the periphery, feel the inadequacies of the Political administration[operating-SM]at the centre.⁴¹

Rakovsky then went on to state where he saw the main blame in the fact that there was no "vital link" established between PUR and the political departments:

I must tell you that, above all, I have been struck today...by the lack of a living link, a constant link between the Political administration and the periphery. Who is to blame for this? Comrades, I think that you would be very unjust if you placed all the blame for this on the Political administration. It is to blame, but what is much more to blame has been the complicated position and circumstances which have existed since PUR was created.⁴²

Rakovsky could have been referring to a number of factors here, not least of which, obviously, would be the

disruption brought about by the Civil War itself, both in terms of manpower and material shortages. However, it is also possible that Rakovsky may have been hinting at something else here, for instance, the virtually permanent secondment of PUR's Chief to a number of revvoensovets, an element that was not to change throughout the length of the Civil War. Also the fact that the appointment of Deputy-Chief seemed, on some occasions, to be reminiscent of a game of musical chairs, even by this stage of the Civil War, would have been apparent to a man like Rakovsky. Needless to say, Rakovsky was not only critical of the situation that PUR found itself in:

the political departments have been too independent of one another and the centre too long. I would say that a certain separatism has been created.⁴³

This criticism was further reinforced by Rakovsky when he went on to argue what he thought was the view of the ideal relationship between the centre and the political departments, as viewed by the political departments themselves:

you will have to admit that many[political departments-SM]willingly want the Political administration to continue as before, separately, so that it does not direct them, only supplies them with money and literature, not interfering in their internal administration and organisation.⁴⁴

Of course. this in itself was a not too heavily

disguised criticism of the political departments themselves. Rakovsky thought that such a situation should not be allowed to continue and pointed out the dangers of the situation where PUR was not in receipt of a lot of reports from the front or army political departments:

in my two months of directing PUR, I have received a total of only 9 reports from the political departments, two of which were from the Southern Front concerning retreating from the front! Every front and army political department is required to send AT LEAST a monthly report...if the fronts and armies do not pass on their experience to the centre, then they do not have the right...to accuse it of being doctrinaire and academic.⁴⁵

However, Rakovsky did end his report to the Congress on a reasonably optimistic note:

I would like to say, comrades, that I consider the main aim of this Congress to be the creation of that living link which, up until now, has been lacking between the Political administration and the political workers.⁴⁶

Thus, judging by Rakovsky's arguments overall, the view from the centre was not a particularly healthy one--the political departments would seem to be more than happy to take PUR's money and the personnel that it sent out, but would appear to have been far less keen in imparting to PUR the information that it needed in order to understand better the work that was being carried out at the front. In many respects, if PUR did not gather in enough of the right sort of information, then its ability to direct the political apparatus at the front would be

seriously hampered. Similar to the position of its predecessor, PUR still had to rely on an equal and precise flow of information from the Army and Front political departments, if it was to carry out its functions to the best of its abilities. Curiously enough, however, although the situation as viewed from PUR's point of view was not too healthy, viewed from the position of the political departments themselves, the opposite could well have been the case. After all, as long as PUR did continue to send out the necessary monies and personnel, the political departments actually working at the front could well have carried out a better job working autonomously of one another, responding more directly to the needs of the soldiers quicker. The political departments could respond in a more flexible way, as regards the conduct of political and educational work, not feeling the need or the pressure to carry out work according to a strict set of regulations emanating from the centre. Of course, it has to be stressed that whether this flexibility was desirable, or not, depended on one's perception-obviously, from the centre, PUR needed to control what was being carried out on the front or, at least, needed to know what was happening at the front. The position viewed from the periphery, however, was different. If the political departments could carry out the political and educational work required, then, as far

as they were concerned, they probably thought that informing the centre was not as important as carrying out the necessary work. The political departments would appear to have little realised the importance of PUR receiving a consistent flow of information from the front.

Following on from Rakovsky's report to the Congress, the Congress would then appeared to have debated the "organisational question" and the "literary-publication activity" of PUR.⁴⁷ Unfortunately, there is no description of either of these debates so it is not possible to detail them.

The next items on the agenda would appear to have been both Smilga's and Trotsky's speeches to the Congress, both of which will be analysed below.

(viii)Smilga and Trotsky's speeches and the closing of the First All-Russian Congress of Political Workers(December 1919)

Both Smilga and Trotsky spoke on the second last day of the Congress-14th December-and, as shown earlier, both men's speeches would appeared to have added something to the overall debate on the future nature of the work of the political apparatus at the front. Mind you, on saying

that, they added varying amounts to the debate: as shown earlier, whereas Trotsky's speech covered a number of concerns of the Red Army, disappointingly, Smilga's virtually concentrated itself on analysing the role of the military commissars in the Red Army.⁴⁸ Trotsky's speech, on the other hand, largely concerned itself with a number of issues and although it too examined the role of the military commissars in the Red Army, unlike Smilga's, it also took on a broader scope, and, consequently, is worth examining in detail here.

Trotsky's speech focussed on a number of important issues, not least of which was the necessity to create a directing organ, in charge of looking after army property; the use of guerrilla attachments in the regular army; the creation of a Ukrainian army; the strict regime of the military censor, with a view to easing up slightly on the latter's functions, etc.⁴⁹ In one reference to the work of PUR, as regards controlling drunkenness amongst the commanders and the commissarial staff, Trotsky had the following to say:

I have received a few letters, stating that, in certain headquarters and even higher centres of authority, drunkenness is flourishing. A struggle against this phenomenon must be started. The commissars not only fail to show the necessary vigour in this struggle, but are also guilty of drunkenness themselves. Measures will have to be taken, through the Political administration, to ensure that drunkenness ceases.⁵⁰

Trotsky then proceeded to emphasise the importance of

carrying out agitational work amongst the White armies:

the Political departments of particular armies and divisions must now, when we are victoriously advancing on all fronts, pay special attention to the disintegration in the ranks of the enemy, and literature specially adapted to the particular needs of the fronts must be prepared...Publishing activity for the purposes of agitation amongst the enemy must be developed to the utmost.⁵¹

Trotsky then closed his speech with a reference to the hard winter that lay ahead for the Bolsheviks and the need to maximise every effort in order to further ensure Bolshevik military victory in the coming year.⁵²

Thus, with both speeches apparently being devoid of any discussion of the issues put forward by Rakovsky, this, in itself, was a curious sign. Other than the question of the future role of the military commissars, Smilga's speech is virtually blank and, although Trotsky did mention a number of points, he virtually did not have too much detail to add to the debate or any of the points made by Rakovsky on the nature of the political apparatus or the nature of the relationship between PUR and the political departments at the front. Such important figures having apparently so little to say about such important issues is cause for interest in itself. Why did neither of the two men not have something more concrete to say about the issues raised by Rakovsky? CC involvement?

As the Congress drew to a close, the description of the last day's work of the Congress is interesting:

on Sunday, late in the evening, the congress of political workers was closed. For more than two days, the delegates have been involved in intensive, almost uninterrupted work in sections and commissions. Only at 9 o'clock in the evening was the work of the sections completed and a plenary session of the congress convened to hear the reports and approve the resolutions, adopted by the sections.⁵³

There is, in actual fact, very little information on the work of these sections, which seemed to have played such an important part in the overall work of the congress. What is available is a number of very brief, newspaper extracts outlining some of what was carried out by these sections, but not in any particular detail. Very little information is available on the number of people involved in the work of the sections or what they were instructed to work on. However, even though there is so little available, it will be duly noted here and examined.

As stated earlier, one of the issues at the Congress was the question of organisation. The organisational section had been split into four sections, these being:

1)staff-organisational; 2)information-publicity;
3)political-registration-civil; 4)financial-budget.⁵⁴

There are some further details about the work of two of these sections, namely the staff-organisational and political-registration sections.

Apparently, the work of the staff-organisational section was mainly concerned with working out the

organisational structure of the Army political departments: according to the relevant newspaper extract, the section decided that:

the Army political departments should consist of four sections: 1) political-educational; 2) supplies; 3) information; 4) administrative-organisational.⁵⁵

Other than these sections, the political department was also meant to contain a general section, which would include an editorial board, a treasury and a clerical office. Unfortunately, that is all that is known about the work of this particular section.

The work of the political-registration section was reported by Katanyan, a name that is not unfamiliar to us. Again, according to the relevant newspaper extract, this particular section:

1) worked out forms for mutual relations between the Party organs and the political departments; 2) approved the draft instructions to the Communist Party cells in the Red Army units... [the report breaks off here-SM].⁵⁶

In the subsequent resolutions of the Congress, a number were devoted to analysing the role of the political departments, vis a vis the other parts of the civilian and military apparatus, as will be detailed later.

There is some information available on the work of the cultural-educational section. The main speaker identified with the work of the latter section was Kasparava.⁵⁷ Apparently, the section decided to re-name itself and

became known as the political-educational section. The re-naming of the organ was for a very good reason:

the apolitical nature of educational work is a fiction, because only on the soil of revolutionary Marxism is it thinkable to consider the real education of the masses.⁵⁸

Other than change its name, the section also worked out the relationship between the political-educational institutions of the Red Army and the organs of the People's Commissariat of Education and, in more general terms, requested that Sovnarkom looked at the relevant part of the decree which transferred the direction of educational work in the Red Army away from RVSR to the People's Commissariat of Education.⁵⁹ In total, this section brought forward nine resolutions for Congress to vote on.

The congress then closed with the passing of a number of fairly detailed resolutions, the report of the mandate commission, which stated that the Congress was attended by 227 delegates, only 2 of whom were not Communist Party members and final speeches by Smilga and Rakovsky.⁶⁰ Before turning to analyse the Congress' resolutions, it would be useful to examine the content of the closing speeches, made by Rakovsky and Smilga, which showed that both men had appreciated a lot of what had been said at the Congress.

According to Smilga's speech, the Congress had managed

to show up a lot of defects in the nature of the relationship between the central authority and the organs working at the front:

the work of the congress has shown that the Political administration was ^{not} linked with the localities, the work of the latter scarcely conforming to the paths marked out by the centre. The reason for this was the military situation, disrupting the systematic character of the work, especially in the area of political work, there was no uniformity, there was a feeling of doing things in isolation and inefficiently. The basic task of the Political administration will be to put into effect the decrees of the congress.⁶¹

Even so, Smilga did end his speech on an optimistic note:

the position for the next congress will be more fortunate. The cause is almost half-finished, we can now expect complete victory and this will give us the opportunity to travel here again and jointly take on the regulation of our work.⁶²

Rakovsky's closing remarks to the Congress were slightly more harsh than Smilga's, more keen on pointing out the duties of the political workers and their responsibilities to the Red Army soldiers:

political workers are not simply employees, they are not government servants but political leaders of the army, who must show an example, by their conduct, to the Red Army masses, both in battle and in conditions of everyday work.⁶³

Thus, although the latter extract can only but be a brief resume of what Rakovsky must have said at the Congress, nevertheless, it does fit in well with what we know

Rakovsky said at the opening of the Congress, as detailed

earlier. All the same, though, it is disappointing that both men's speeches were not published in full, but, even so, it would appear that in both men's comments, there are two different schools of thought working, with Smilga being slightly more optimistic about what the future would bring than Rakovsky. At the time, as shown in the section on personnel, Rakovsky was more involved in political work and possibly understood the strains better than Smilga, who was constantly serving on various battle-fronts throughout the Civil War. Whether, of course, either of the two men's views were to be proven correct would only be shown by time itself but, before analysing the work of PUR and the Red Army's political apparatus in 1920, it is necessary to examine the resolutions of the Congress, as a conclusion to this section and as a prologue to the beginning of the next one.

(ix)The resolutions of the First All-Russian Congress of Political Workers(December 1919)

There are two main versions of the Congress' resolutions-one version which appeared immediately after the Congress itself, published in an issue of "Politrabotnik" in early 1920 and, more recently, another collection of the resolutions appeared in a volume of

documents, devoted to analysing various meetings and congresses of political workers of the Red Army, published in 1984.⁶⁴ The two versions of the resolutions differ mainly in the layout of the resolutions, i.e. the order in which they appear in the two versions is, for some inexplicable reason, different. Since the detail in the resolutions is so great, only those of most relevance to the body of this dissertation will be noted here, in order to save time and unnecessary exposition.

The first resolution in the 1920 version of the resolutions-this copy being the copy of the resolutions that will be referred to throughout this section-was entitled, "on the principles of political-educational work in the Red Army."⁶⁵ The resolution was mainly concerned with stating the overall aims of the political-educational work being carried out in the Red Army:

in order to strengthen the construction of the Red Army as a weapon for the successful completion of the Civil War and the victory of the proletariat, at the very heart of the education of the Red Army soldier should be the principles of revolutionary Marxism, awakenning and organising the class consciousness and the creative self-activity of the armed labouring masses. Education carried out along these lines will create amidst the Red Army a real supporter of Communist culture, as well as amongst the peaceful civilian population, and secure for it[the Red Army-SM]the swiftest possible victory over the bourgeois world...All areas of political-educational work, be it by word or artistsic means, must deepen political agitation and strict devotion to the military tasks of the Red Army.⁶⁶

This general statement reveals that the cultural-

educational work being carried out by the political departments had come to be seen as having a distinct political and military purpose. The statement emphasises that the work to be carried out in the Red Army had a distinct military, as well as cultural and political, purpose to it. This is important to understand, as it helps to explain why the Bolsheviks did spend so much time, money and effort to ensure that the Red Army's political departments could carry out the political and cultural work that the centre required that the front political apparatus carry out.

The next section of the resolutions then went on to discuss the organs that were required to carry out the work:

1) the great significance which political-educational work has in the Red Army underlined the necessity for the creation of a special organ-the Political administration of RVSR, with its departments, commissioned to carry out work over the entire length of the RSFSR, according to the demands of the RVSR and the CC of the RCP.
2) The division, in the structure of PUR, into separate and independent departments-political and educational-does not signify the desire to attach to educational work in the army the nature of pure kulturtr gerstvo [from the German, "Kulturträger", meaning a person with a civilising mission-SM], but only the aspiration to separate the political-administrative functions from the political-educational ones.⁶⁷

The latter resolution is almost a restatement of basic principles, in some respects, not least in its estimation of the relationship between PUR, RVSR and the CC of the RCP. The fact that PUR's functions could be broken down

into two broad spheres-political and educational-probably encouraged the implied statement that PUR consisted of only the two departments whereas, in actual fact, PUR did consist of a number of departments. However, in its broad range of responsibilities, PUR carried out its work in the two broad areas of work. Thus, having discussed the general position of the centre, the resolution then went on to discuss the broad responsibilities of the peripheries:

3)the leading organs of educational work in the localities are the political-educational sections of the political-educational departments of the okrug military commissariats, the guberniya military commissariats for military units in the rear and the political-educational sections of the political departments of the fronts, armies and divisions for military units at the front.⁶⁸

If the situation arose, for instance, that the front political department, the army political department and the political-educational department of a okrug or guberniya military commissariat were all located at the same time in the same city, then the front and army political departments were instructed to look after the interests of their own military units and institutions and the relevant political-educational department would render assistance if and when it was required.⁶⁹ Hopefully, this would lead to a reduction in the the possibility of parallelism in the work of each of the political departments.

The next resolution worth analysing was entitled, "on the organisation of educational work."⁷⁰ The most important parts of this resolution in particular were the references to the work of the Party cells and the military commissars:

3)having as their main aim the political education of the Red Army soldiers, the Communist Party cell must, at the same time, watch over the general direction of educational work in the unit, try to enliven it, in every way render it assistance.⁷¹

The commissars were enjoined to do everything in their power and capabilities to carry out the necessary political-educational work and help to remove all obstacles towards the successful completion of the political-educational work being undertaken in the unit.⁷²

The next series of resolutions that appear in the 1920 issue of "Politrabotnik" concerned the implementation of school-educational work, the work of the Red Army's clubs, work in the areas of theatre, music, cinema and sport, etc.⁷³ However, the next important resolution worth looking at was on the supply of political-educational workers for the front:

1)the existing resource of political-educational workers, presently taking part in cultural organisation in the army, is inadequate.

2)This condition has been brought about by, on the one hand, the inadequately full use of the cultural forces of the Republic and, on the other hand, the generally low cultural-level of the country.⁷⁴

The resolution then proposed a potential solution to the problem:

4)it is necessary to recruit political-educational workers not only by attracting to the work intelligent and semi-intelligent people from society,(as has been the case until recently), but, mainly, by broadly attracting the Red Army masses to cultural-educational work.⁷⁴

This would appear to have envisaged an attack on the problem from two sides, not only in stepping up recruitment amongst that sector of the population most suited to the task, but also in attempting to attract the most able of the Red Army soldiers themselves. Whether, or not, such an approach did have a positive effect on the number of cultural-educational workers joining the Red Army, is difficult to say, given the lack of the relevant figures. However, at least on the face of it, it would appear to have been a good idea.

In the next major resolution, on agitation and propaganda, the role of the political department was seen as very important:

5)to put into practice...the tasks of agitation and propaganda, the political department must use the authority of every Communist in the Red Army, regardless of the post he occupies. With this purpose in mind, special work should be placed on every Communist, (the reading of lectures, reading and commenting on newspaper articles, talks, lessons in school, etc)which must be carried out not casually...but systematically, as a Party duty.⁷⁵

Needless to say, importance was also attached to the agitational work of the political departments in the

enemy's rear.⁷⁶

The final two resolutions in the version of the resolutions contained in "Politrabotnik" were concerned with the work of the schools in the Red Army, as regards the conduct of courses for political literacy, and the organisation of information.⁷⁷ As will be shown in the next section, a lot of time and effort were devoted to the courses of political literacy, in a real attempt to educate the soldiers and make them politically more aware.

The lack of information had been a point of contention at the Congress and in the relevant resolution on the question of information, Congress resolved that the political departments were to:

1) send in daily telegraph reports... 2) a fortnightly statistical table on the state of political and cultural-educational work.⁷⁸

One thing that can be said about PUR's work in the Civil War is, one way or another, PUR did manage to amass a whole range of statistical information on a wide variety of subjects, from Communist Party membership to the amount of literature being sent to the fronts for the various months of the year! Someone must have been sending in the information in 1920, so, obviously, the supply of information to the centre must have improved. As was to be described in a later article appearing in "Politrabotnik", the type of information that PUR wanted

from the political departments was the following:

1)on supplies; 2)on the Red Army soldiers(military capability, mood, consciousness); 3)on the command staff; 4)on the commissars and the political leaders[introduced in October 1919, the political leaders("rukovoditeli")were in charge of the political apparatus away at the bottom of the front political apparatus and were designed to help both the commissar and the Party cell-SM]; 4)on the commissars and the political leaders; 5)on political work; 6)on cultural-educational work; 7)on the medical-sanitary state of the unit; 8)on the state of the region closest to the front; 9)information on the enemy; 10)instances of heroism.⁷⁹

If such reports were compiled by the various political departments, then they would be vital in assessing the importance of political work to the Red Army.

Unfortunately, as yet, they are still locked away in the archives of the Ministry of Defence and have not been made available for independent examination by any Western scholar.

However, before leaving the resolution of the Congress altogether, it should be noted that although the 1920 version of the resolutions ended with the resolution on the establishment of an information link between the centre and the localities, in the 1984 version of the Congress' resolutions, a number of other resolutions are republished which did not appear in the original 1920 version.⁸⁰ For reasons which are totally unknown, the resolutions which did not appear in the 1920 version included the resolutions on the relationship between the local political apparatus and the organs of the People's

ommissariat of Education⁸¹; the relationship between the civilian and military organs in the localities⁸²; the relationship between the political departments and the Party organs⁸³ and, finally, the registration and distribution of Communist Party members at the front.⁸⁴ The first resolution described above, i.e. that concerned with analysing the nature of the relationship between the Red Army's political apparatus and the organs of the People's Commissariat of Education stated the following:

4. In the interests of the strictest economy of effort and resources, the congress considers it necessary to coordinate the activity of the organs of Narkompros [abbreviation for the people's Commissariat of Education-SM] and political work in the army in a whole range of educational tasks: preparation of personnel, publication of text books, etc. In order to achieve this aim, both in the centre and in the localities,⁸⁵ the appropriate agreements will have to be made.

A draft set of instructions was then published, designed to set out the framework of the future coordination of activity between the local political apparatus and the local educational apparatus.⁸⁶ Thus, with the help of the local educational apparatus, Red Army units were to receive 30% of all available theatre and cinema tickets; access to all educational institutions, at the disposal of the local educational departments, e.g. museums, libraries, clubs, etc. Schools were also to be used in the campaign to abolish illiteracy from the ranks of the Red Army.⁸⁷

The next resolution not contained in the 1920 version was the one concerned with the relationship between the civilian and Party organs in the localities.⁸⁸ Basically, the resolution stated that all commands and orders of the Revolutionary military soviets (the RMS) were to be carried out by the local organs of Soviet power to the best of the latter's ability and without delay.⁸⁹ As it stated tersely:

all instructions of the Revvoensovets, in the area of serving the army, must be carried out, put into practical effect by the local organs of Soviet power.⁹⁰

The resolution on defining the nature of the role of the local political apparatus and the Red Army's political apparatus went over some fairly well-trodden ground, an interesting statement in itself, given the fact that the resolution was passed in December 1919, i.e. well into the history of the Red Army's political apparatus. The most relevant statement of this particular resolution was the following:

Party work in the units, administrations and departments of the military department, subordinated to the division, army and front command, must be carried out by the corresponding political departments.⁹¹

By this stage, the latter statement should have been obvious to all concerned in the Red Army's political apparatus, the fact that it had to be made shows that for

some in the political apparatus, the statement was not as superfluous as it should have been. In order to help coordinate Party work, it was resolved that the chief of the front political department be coopted on to the highest local Party committee.⁹² The various other parts of the resolution were concerned with improving the overall efficiency of the Red Army's political apparatus.

The main point in the final resolution not listed in the 1920 version of the Congress' resolution, concerning the registration and distribution of Party members, was that the latter be exclusively controlled by the front political department.⁹³ The resolution also stated that under-used Party members be more effectively used and that, as regards the the arrival and transfer of Party members at the front, PUR be constantly informed.⁹⁴

It was also the case that the Congress was responsible for the changes that occurred in the structure and work of the political departments serving the soldiers on the front. This reorganisation of the Red Army's front political apparatus must go down as one of the most significant changes that took place in the history of the Red Army's political apparatus during the entire length of the Civil war and has yet been little detailed. However, one accurate summary of the events of January 1920 stated thus:

in January 1920, the statutes on the political departments were put into effect, outlining the rights and duties of

the political departments and the relationship between the political departments, the commissars and the Party organisations in the Red Army. The front political department was in general control of the activity of the army political department and was directly in charge of the political-educational work in the units, staffs and institutions at the front. The chief of a front political department was directly subordinate to the Front RMS and PUR...the army political department was in charge of the activity of the divisional political departments, political-educational work in the units and institutions of the army, it recommended to the army RMS candidates for the post of commissar, instructed them on questions of organisation and political-educational work. It was directly subordinate to the army RMS...the divisional political department was directly in charge of the political, Party and cultural life of the military units of the division, the work of the Communist Party cells and the cultural-educational commissions in the units, the work of the commissars of the units, recommending candidates for the post of commissar. It was subordinate to the divisional commissar.⁹⁵

This admittedly rather lengthy extract, whilst summarising the statutes of 22nd January 1920 fairly cogently, does not fully convey the real impact of the January 1920 statutes, namely that, once again, to transfer the burden of political work away from the army political department onto the shoulders of the divisional political departments. This decision had been initially brought about by the 8th Party Congress in March 1919 and would appear to have been subsequently reaffirmed by the First All-Russian Congress of Political Workers in December 1919.

(x)Conclusion

Given what has just been written about the Congress, it would appear that summarising the work of the latter would be relatively simple-after all, the Congress was important for a number of reasons, not least of which was it was the first time that PUR had produced and submitted a report on its activity for the first six months of its existence. This, if nothing else, would make the Congress worthy of detailed examination. However, in attempting to assess its overall impact on the future development of the Red Army's political apparatus, then the position of the Congress becomes slightly more difficult. How far were the resolutions implemented on the ground? Unfortunately, that is the main question that has to be asked in this context and, given the lack of relevant material, simply cannot be answered as yet. By examining the work of PUR in 1920, it is possible to hint at the likely effects concerning the implementation of a number of the resolutions of the Congress but, other than that, to say that all the decisions were carefully put into effect and were a resounding success would be historically misleading. In evaluating the Congress' importance, then, one has to look back at what we know for sure happened, i.e. that a number of the Red Army's leading figures took

part in the Congress' debate; that PUR presented a comprehensive report on the first six months of its activity; that over 200 front-line and rear political workers took part in the Congress, therefore making it one of the largest gatherings of political workers of the Red Army in 1918-1919 and, finally, that the debates and the commissions set up by the Congress to look into a whole range of issues, concerning the future development of the Red Army's political and cultural-educational apparatus did produce some results in the year to come. Thus, in ending this particular section, all the necessary background information has been given to prepare the reader for the final section in this chapter-a comprehensive examination of the work of PUR in 1920.

NOTES(1):-

1. "Politrabotnik", No.1, M.1920, p.3.
2. Ibid.
3. "Izvestiya Sovetov rabochikh, soldatskikh i krestyanskikh deputatov gor. Moskvyy i Moskovskoi oblasti." 12.12.1919.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. "Politrabotnik", No.1, M.1920, pp.9-14.
11. Ibid., p.9.
12. "Izvestiya...", 13.12.1919.
13. N.P.Bondarenko, "Kommunisticheskaya partiya-organizator deyatel'nosti voennykh komissarov v period inostrannoi interventsii i grazhdanskoi voyny(po materialam Ukrainy)." Kharkov, 1972, dissertational summary, p.15.
14. "Politrabotnik", No.1, M.1920, p.9.
15. Ibid.
16. "Direktivyy komandovaniya frontov Krasnoi Armii(1917-1922). Sbornik dokumentov v 4-kh tomakh." Vol.4, M.1978, p.105.
17. "Politrabotnik", No.1, M.1920, p.9.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.

NOTES(2):-

21. Sheila Fitzpatrick, "The Commissariat of Enlightenment. Soviet organisation of Education and the Arts under Lunacharsky, October 1917-1921." Cambridge, 1970, p.291.

22. "Politrabotnik", No.1, M.1920, p.10.

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid.

26. "Partiino-politicheskaya rabota v Krasnoi Armii(mart 1919-1920). Dokumenty." Vol.2, M.1964, pp.156-157.

27. Ibid., p.156; "Istoricheskii arkhiv", M.1959, p.33.

28. "Politrabotnik", No.1, M.1920, p.11.

29. Ibid.

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid.

33. Ibid.

34. Ibid.

35. Ibid., p.12.

36. Ibid.

37. Ibid.

38. Ibid.

39. Ibid.

40. Ibid.

41. Ibid., p.13.

42. Ibid.

43. Ibid.

NOTES(3):-

44. "Politrabotnik", No.1, M.1920, p.11
45. Ibid.
46. Ibid. p.14.
47. "Izvestiya...", 13.12.1919.
48. See previous section.
49. L.D.Trotsky, "How the Revolution armed itself. The year 1919", vol.2, NY, 1979, pp.109-112.
50. Ibid., p.113,
51. Ibid.
52. Ibid. p.114.
53. "Izvestiya...", 16.12.1919.
54. Ibid.
55. Ibid.
56. Ibid.
57. Ibid.
58. Ibid.
59. Ibid.
60. Ibid.
61. Ibid.
62. Ibid.
63. Ibid.
64. The two sources in question being the 1920 January issue of "Politrabotnik" and the 1984 work, "Vsearmeyskie soveshchaniya politrabotnikov. 1918-1940. (Rezoliutsii)", pp.16-29.
65. "Politrabotnik", No.1, M.1920, p.15.
66. Ibid.

NOTES(4):-

67. "Politrabotnik", No.1, M.1920, p.15.
68. Ibid.
69. Ibid.
70. Ibid. pp.15-16.
71. Ibid.
72. Ibid.
73. Ibid., p.17.
74. Ibid. p.19.
75. Ibid.,
76. Ibid.
77. Ibid. pp.19-20.
78. Ibid. p.20.
79. "Politrabotnik", No.6, M.1920, p.3.
80. "Vsearmeyskie soveshchaniya...", M.1984, pp.21-28.
81. Ibid., pp.15-16.
82. Ibid., p.21.
83. Ibid., pp.27-28.
84. Ibid., p.15.
85. Ibid.
86. Ibid., p.16.
87. Ibid.
88. Ibid., p.21.
89. Ibid.
90. Ibid.
91. Ibid., p.26.

NOTES(5):-

92. "Vsearmeyskie soveshchaniya...", M.1984, p.26.

93. Ibid., pp.27-28.

94. Ibid., p.28.

95. S.S.Khromov, "Grazhdanskaya voina i voennaya
interventsiya v SSSR. Entsiklopediya." M.1983, 1st
edition, pp.464-465

CHAPTER THREE(SECTION FIVE):-

PUR AND POLITICAL-EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL-EDUCATIONAL
WORK IN THE RED ARMY IN 1919-1920.

Having examined PUR's structure, leadership, work, etc., for 1919, it is now possible to bring this chapter to a close by detailing the work of PUR in 1920. In many ways, 1920 was to be a decisive year both for PUR and the Soviet Republic-by the end of the year, the Bolsheviks had all but won the Civil War and, also by this time, PUR was to face a major organisational change, largely brought about by its own success during the preceding eighteen months of activity. However, that will be discussed later, suffice it to say presently that the year was, in many respects, the culminating point both for Bolshevik fortunes in the war and PUR's Civil War activity.

Since there is a mass of data and figures on PUR's activity during the Civil War, this section, similar to the last section, will be sub-divided into a number of sub-sections, thereby making the presentation of the material easier to digest. Each sub-section will focus on one particular area of PUR's work, i.e. the anti-illiteracy campaign, the recruitment of CP members, cultural-educational activity, etc. In such a way, once all the relevant sub-sections are put together, it will be

possible to arrive at an overall view of PUR's work during this period. In detailing PUR's work during 1920, it will then be possible to attempt to assess PUR's contribution to the total war effort of the Bolsheviks and evaluate its importance to the Bolshevik victory. Since PUR's role, as regards the mobilisation and distribution of CP members and political workers to the front political units, was significant the first sub-section will be devoted to analysing the number of CP members and political workers mobilised and distributed by PUR at this time.

(i) PUR and the mobilisation and distribution of CP members and political workers to the front Red Army units (October 1919-August 1920).

Beloborodov's brief account of his work in PUR does provide some information about the early role of PUR in the mobilisation and distribution of CP members to fill the various posts in the front Red Army units:

at the beginning, the CC created a commission which looked at lists of Communists, drawn up according to institution, and mobilised everyone possible. Then a universal 'call-up' was announced: every Communist had to appear before PUR, fill in a form, personally expand on a number of answers to a few questions, thereby determining his suitability for the army and the nature of his future work. For instance, if he knew how to ride a horse, he

was sent to the cavalry; if he was a teacher of Russian history, he was sent to a Red Army school.¹

Whilst this method would appear to be on the primitive side, nevertheless, there was no other option open to PUR. It should also be borne in mind that when Beloborodov actually worked in PUR (July-September 1919), PUR had not been long in existence and, therefore, initially at least, things would be a bit rough and ready. Further on in his article, Beloborodov even goes as far as to state that the role of the Communist party cadres was vital for the victory of the Bolsheviks.² Given the almost constant demand from the front for CP members, it certainly would appear that the number of Communists in the ranks of the Red Army would seem to have been an important factor in the determination of the final outcome of the war. Thus, in detailing the number of CP members and political workers in the Red Army during the Civil War would be an important step towards evaluating the overall influence of the Party in the Red Army and it is to that we now turn.

Detailing the CP presence in the Red Army throughout 1919-1920 is not all that difficult. One set of figures, originally published in 1928 to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the formation of the Red Army, has been reproduced constantly by Soviet historians of the topic ever since.³ There have been a few minor fluctuations but, overall, the majority of Soviet historians would appear to have stuck to this original set of figures and

quoted them quite happily. It is no surprise to learn that the figures, in question, were prepared by PUR's Information-statistics department and were probably gleaned from archival sources, therefore insuring their accuracy.

As we already know, by 1st October 1919, in the Field Army, there were 61,681 CP members and sympathisers listed as serving in the former, with a further 60,000 CP members and sympathisers, serving in the rear institutions and units.⁴ By the beginning of January 1920, the total figure for the number of CP members and sympathisers in the Red Army had increased to 153,523 men.⁵ From archival sources, the Soviet military historian, V.G.Kolychev, has estimated that of this figure, some 100,000 were actually serving in the front military units and institutions.⁶ Obviously, in the case of the latter figure, Kolychev has arrived at an estimate and has not been able to produce an exact figure for the number of CP members and sympathisers in the Red Army by this time.

The figures continued to grow, however. By March 1920, the new total had risen to 182,726.⁷ Of this total, 104,238 CP members and sympathisers were working on the front-the largest concentration of Party members and sympathisers serving in the 4 Armies on the Caucasus Front, the grand total there being 26,996 men.⁸ However, the largest number of Party members and sympathisers in a

single Army belonged to an Army operating on the Eastern Front: the newly-created 1st Army of Labour (the former 3 Army) had 16,534 CP members and sympathisers in its ranks.⁹

The largest total number of CP members and sympathisers peaked in August 1920 and, even then, the figure is an underestimation of the true state of affairs. As of August 1920, 278,040 CP members and sympathisers served in the ranks of the Red Army.¹⁰ In commenting on this huge figure of the Party membership involved in the Red Army, another Soviet military historian has stated that the Party layer in the Red Army was five times larger than in the leading areas of industry.¹¹ Of this figure, it is usually stated that 120,185 CP members and sympathisers were serving at the front.¹² However, one has to be careful in making this statement, as this total figure is, in itself, not complete. Checking through the relevant table listed in the source, "Direktivny komandovaniya..." (Vol.4, M.1978), whilst it is possible to find the figure listed above quoted as the number of CP members and sympathisers, serving at the front by August 1920, the table also makes it clear that there are a number of totals missing in the compilation of this grand total. Therefore, there are no figures for the number of CP members and sympathisers for 8 Army (Caucasus Front), 1 Army (Turkestan Front); it was also the case that,

apparently, not all the Armies that did send in figures were able to send in complete figures because, for a variety of reasons, not all of the divisions were taken into account; finally, one total which was included in the grand total but has to be extracted, if we want to know how many CP members and sympathisers were actually serving on the front, is the total for the Reserve Army, the Volga-Caspian Flotilla and, finally, the Baltic Fleet. This total was 16,404, therefore, the new total for the number of CP members and sympathisers is not 120,185+, but 103,781+. Using this new total, it is then possible to actually list the spread of Party members and sympathisers on the four main fronts of the Civil War:

Western Front.....	35,175;
South-Western Front.....	21,189;
Caucasus Front.....	22,964+;
Turkestan Front.....	24,453+.

Grand total....103,781+.

Thus, whilst the work described reduces the usually accepted figure, it should obviously not be forgotten that the reduction has to take place against the background that the overall total is still not accurate, in itself. Since the figures were not all complete, the reduction

still has to be read as 103,781+. Without access to the relevant archival sources and, it could well be the case that not even the archives would be able to sort out this problem, it is simply impossible to say EXACTLY how many CP members and sympathisers were serving on the front by August 1920.

However, as will be detailed later, this huge commitment to the Red Army did not last too long; as the military danger receded, so did the need for such a vast proportion of the Party's membership devoted to military work and soon the former military-Party cadres began to be demobilised and sent to various other areas of work.

Although PUR had an important role as regards the proper distribution of Party members et al. over the various fronts, it should not be forgotten that PUR had to perform a similar function in the despatch and posting of political workers, cultural-educational workers, Communist Youth volunteers, etc. However, totalling the exact numbers of these is more complex than assessing the total number of CP members and sympathisers in the army. This can best be explained not so much by a lack of information, but more by the existence of conflicting sets of figures. Why the relevant source materials should conflict in this particular area, and not in others, is impossible to explain, especially when one remembers the importance that PUR attached to the collation of such

materials. What makes the situation worse is that differences between the figures number not just tens or even hundreds, but thousands. However, regardless of the difficulties, the figures will be examined below.

The earliest table that can be found, setting out the number of political workers sent out by PUR, between December 1919 to August 1920, stated that PUR sent out 3,425 political workers.¹³ Using the exact same dates, the relevant source also showed that PUR had also sent out a further 900 cultural-educational workers, as well as 7,854 workers from the Soviet civilian institutions, designed to help out in the conduct of the cultural-educational work of the Red Army.¹⁴ Overall, apparently, the number of Communist Youth volunteers, teachers, technical workers, etc., sent out by PUR to the Red Army between December 1919-August 1920, according to this source, was 22,530 people.¹⁵

A month after the publication of these data, however, new figures on the total number of political workers alone sent out by PUR, between June 1919-July 1920, would seem to cast serious doubt on the total just quoted. The new set of figures were contained in a special report on political and cultural-educational work in the Red Army between 1918-1920, commissioned by PUR in October 1920 and headed by the then chief of PUR's Agitation-education department, V.I.Suzdaltseva.¹⁶ Thus, according to

Suzdaltseva's report, between June 1919-July 1920, PUR sent out 17,707 political workers to the Red Army, with 5,403 being sent out in October 1919 alone.¹⁷ Apparently, the overwhelming majority of the political workers sent out were either CP members or sympathisers.¹⁸ The only likely explanation for such a difference between the two sets of figures could be that in using the term, "political worker", Suzdaltseva's definition included more categories of people, than when it was employed in the compilation of the figures provided in "Politrabotnik". In general, it has to be said that neither Suzdaltseva nor PUR actually quote a definition of the term, "political worker", despite the frequent use of the term, therefore it is impossible to say for sure exactly what did PUR, or Suzdaltseva, mean when they compiled these figures. Recourse to the relevant section of documents contained in the volume, "Direktivy komandovaniya..." helps only to confuse the picture even more.

The September 1920 table has been reproduced in the 1978 collection, "Direktivy komandovaniya...", although December 1918 is given as the start of the table, but then Suzdaltseva's report is also listed.¹⁹ As if the picture was not already confused enough, there is yet another table entitled, "on the number of political workers sent out by PUR from 1st April 1919 to 1st March 1920."²⁰ Regardless of the inaccuracy of the title, i.e. PUR did

not come into formal existence until May 1919, the table quotes an even smaller figure for the number of political workers sent out by PUR-1,451.²¹ The table also listed PUR sending out 338 cultural-educational workers, 4,209 workers from the Soviet civilian institutions, 241 Communist Youth volunteers, etc., all being sent out to the Red Army, as well as the previous number of political workers.²² It is again impossible to account for the difference in the figures: if one takes the average per month (based on the figures supplied in "Politrabotnik") then the average number of political workers being sent to the front was 428 per month, therefore, 1,451 would appear to be a three-monthly total and yet, it clearly states in the heading to the table, that the starting point is the 1st April 1919. The difference is impossible to resolve at present. Another table in this particular collection also shows that between December 1918 to July 1920, some 19,777 Party workers were sent out to the Red Army.²³ Given the dates listed, assuming that the Red Army's political apparatus was obviously involved, then VBVK would also have had a role to play in the number of Party workers being sent to the front, as well as PUR. Obviously, another question that needs to be answered here is what was the difference between a "Party worker" and a "political worker"? If any?

In looking back at the various figures involved, it is

impossible presently to clear up the position of the number of political workers sent out to the Red Army, by PUR, during this time. Is the figure 22,530 or 17,707? Why the confusion? Why has no Soviet historian noted these discrepancies already and made an attempt to correct them? Is there a possibility that both Suzdaltseva and "Politrabotnik" were working from different definitions of the term, "political worker"? What was the difference? Where do the "Party workers" fit into all of this? These are all worthy questions but, as yet, will have to wait before they can be properly answered.

(ii)Evaluating the military value of the CP members, political workers and workers to the Red Army(1919-1920)

In examining this particular point, one has to be very careful to sift through the propaganda and the historically recent statements in order to try and arrive at a more objective assessment of the role of the CP members et al. in the Red Army and their importance to the overall Bolshevik victory. As previously shown, there was always a firm definition of the military role of the Red Army's political apparatus, and that also held true for the political representatives of the Party in the Red

Army, whether they were called political workers or Party workers or were themselves Party members. Even in Lindov's 1919 work, previously quoted, there are a number of references to the duties and responsibilities of the Party representatives in the Red Army; for instance, in the latter work, Lindov stated that the main duties of the Party workers should be:

1) participation in the general leadership of the life and activity of the army; 2) control over the command staff; 3) political education of the Red Army soldiers; 4) maintenance of the revolutionary spirit and revolutionary discipline in the military units of the Red Army.²⁴

Thus, as previously detailed, the work of the Party representatives in the Red Army did not entirely consist of political or educational-cultural work being carried out amongst the men, but there was also a significant emphasis placed on the military and disciplinary work to be carried out amongst the soldiers by the Party representatives. In evaluating the importance of the CP element in the Red Army, one author, writing as early as 1921, stated that:

if the tens of thousands of Communists, who poured into the Red Army and created in it strong cells of the Party, had not been actually, specifically and generally, an example for the non-Party Red Army masses, both in battle and at rest, then the Red Army would not have been victorious as it was victorious.²⁵

This idea of the importance of the CP element to

Bolshevik victory is one which is repeated very easily by Soviet historians, but one which has to be treated with a degree of caution. It could well be the case that the CP element in the Red Army helped to firm up, so to speak, unsound or military incapable units, the point is where is the evidence to prove it? Propaganda aside, there is some evidence to show that Soviet historians may actually be making a valuable point here and that Western historians should look into this more closely. For instance, in a speech he made in December 1921, S.I. Gusev made the following interesting assertion:

the minimum number of Communists in a military unit, lower than which the unit would be completely militarily ineffective was 6% [of the total number of men in the unit-SM]. Units, which had from 6%-12% Communists were, more or less, steadfast, but only in those units where the number of Communists was more than 12% were the units completely steadfast and *combat effective*.²⁶

Given the fact that when Gusev made the speech, he was then the new Chief of PUR, one could easily dismiss such a statement as simply being a case where, for whatever reason, Gusev wanted to attach great importance to the work of the apparatus that he now controlled. That would be a logical statement to make and one that would be difficult to argue with. However, given that the % figures are so precise and that Gusev himself did serve on a variety of fronts during the Civil War-the Eastern Front, South-Eastern Front, the Caucasus Front, etc.²⁷-and

that he had been a member of Field Staff of RVSR, as well as being a proper member of RVSR later, it would be reasonable to assume that the figures were not dreamt out of nothing and that there was a school of thought, so to speak, which reckoned that the figures that Gusev quoted were true and accurate. He was making this speech in December 1921, long before there was a real need to crave the support of any one of the main twenties oppositional factions, when the Bolsheviki could still face being told the truth. Thus, the argument put forward here would be to accept Gusev's estimates, for the time being, but to try and look for other supporting evidence.

Unfortunately, Gusev did not mention a source for the figures quoted—one must assume that they were derived either from his own personal observations, or reports coming in from the fronts, or a mixture of both.

Unfortunately, this a lot easier said than done but, something which will make the task slightly easier is to examine another part of Gusev's speech, in which he talked about the class composition of the CP members mobilised for the front:

during the Civil War, on a number of occasions, mobilisations of Communists for the front were held...undoubtedly, the overwhelming majority(probably up to 90%)of the mobilised Communists were workers.²⁸

A few years after the above statement was made, a very interesting article appeared in the Soviet military press,

concerning the discipline of a number of units in relation to the class composition of the units.²⁹ The article opened with a number of interesting statements about the role of the Communists in the Red Army during the Civil War:

agitation and the influence of educational work of the Communists in the army during the Civil War were very strong, because Communists by their life, by their example, by their sacrifice, were able to show the justice of their cause.³⁰

In further support of this, the author quoted a figure of some 50,000 Communists who died on the various fronts during the Civil War(1918-1920).³¹ However, this figure would seem to be the object of some dispute. Although he did not quote an actual source for his own estimate, one other Soviet historian, Yu.P.Petrov, writing in admittedly more recent times, has stated that the number of dead Communists during the Civil War was 200,000.³² The balance of evidence, however, seems to be swinging back in favour of the earlier quote-in the most recent reference yet to the number of Communists who died at the front during the Civil War, another authoritative source has fallen back on the original figure of 50,000, and has used the latter as its total for the number of Communists who died at the front, during 1918-1920.³³

The main point of the article, however, was not to investigate the number of dead Communists during the Civil

war but, as stated earlier to analyse the class composition of the units and their disciplinary records. Obviously, he did not mean to encompass the entire Red Army, but what he did was to draw up a table of the best disciplined and worst disciplined units in the Red Army and analyse the % composition of workers in each of the units. If we remember that a large proportion of the workers used in the Red Army were members of the CP, then it gives us a rough idea of how important the CP/working-class element in the maintenance of the necessary discipline and, more importantly, the battle capability of the units. The table is reproduced below:

Divisions and units, which excelled in battle and had a higher proportion of workers than in the unsteady units.

The good units.

5th division.....	15.8%	workers.
6th division.....	16.1%	"
5 Army.....	15.3%	"
14th division.....	19.4%	"
20th division.....	18.9%	"
28th division.....	19.6%	"
45th division.....	19.9%	"
42nd division.....	22.4%	"
41st division.....	25.8%	"
1 Cavalry Army.....	21.7%	"
8th Red Cavalry division.....	26.4%	"
etc.		

The unsteady units.

9th division.....	10.5%	workers.
210th Rifle regiment.....	5.7%	"
In the guardrooms of the entire Army and Fleet		
at the time of the census.....	12.2%	"
In the penal battalions.....	9.7%	workers.
In the teams of deserters.....	3.8%	34

The census referred to in the table is one that was carried out in the Red Army in August 1920.

Thus, although this table does specifically refer to the number of workers in the units, rather than CP membership, if one remembers that the majority of the working-class members of the Red Army were CP members, there would appear to be some evidence supporting Gusev's earlier assertion concerning the combat effectiveness of the unit and its class and political composition. The less the number of workers, the less reliable the military unit was; a similar position would also seem to have been recorded as regards the CP composition of the units and their military efficacy. Remembering Gusev's assertion about the number of Communists needed to make units reliable in the military sense, there certainly would appear to be some correlation between both sets of figures, i.e. less than 6% Communists and the unit was none too effective, certainly, the position would seem to be about the same as regards the number of workers, i.e. in the 210th Rifle regiment, the figure is less than 6% and, in all the units which are listed as good in the table, the lowest figure for the number of workers in the unit is 15.3%, similar to Gusev's assertion concerning the military reliability of the unit and its CP representation (more than 12% of the total). Therefore, there would seem to be a strong link between the number of

workers, the number of Communists and the military reliability of the unit, although, more evidence needs to be produced in order to show the exact nature of this link.

(iii)PUR and the political and cultural-educational work in the Red Army(1920): background

As detailed before, PUR was responsible for a wide range of political and cultural-educational work being carried out in the Red Army, both directly and indirectly. In many ways, all the theatres, schools, clubs, etc., owed their existence to PUR, either through the latter setting them up or, just as importantly, helping to fund them. PUR funded a massive series of programmes to combat the political and cultural backwardness of the ordinary rank-and-file soldier. In this particular context, it should be noted that for the first half of 1920 alone, PUR's budget ran to a staggering 4,000 million rubles³⁵, for comparison's sake, at this time, the budget for the People's Commissariat of Education ran to only 1,215 million rubles³⁶ and the Cheka's budget ran to 4,488 million rubles³⁷, not that much in front of PUR's budget. Therefore, in terms of money alone, PUR has to be rated as

one of the Civil War's most important organs.

In evaluating the importance of political and cultural-educational work, the chief of PUR's Educational department, V.D.Kasparova wrote in early 1920 that:

cultural-educational work must not only work parallel with political work but, sometimes, must even precede it, as it is necessary to conduct oral propaganda, but in order to strengthen the latter and fix it in the minds of the men, they, for their part, must know how to read and write...political agitation completes the political education of the Red Army soldier, begun by the Communist cultural worker.³⁸

In another early statement on the importance of the political and cultural-educational work to be carried out in the Red Army, Kasparova touched on yet another tenet of the work being carried out, that of raising the consciousness of the men:

the army in the socialist state is a union of conscious citizens, fighting for the great ideal of the international brotherhood of workers...but the struggle for the socialist revolution presupposes the total political consciousness of all its participants and, consequently, their general cultural development.

Proceeding from this, one must recognise that to educational work in the Red Army be attached no less attention than political work with which, in general, it is indisputably linked and united.³⁹

Thus, political and cultural-educational work was carried out to raise the overall political and educational level of the ordinary rank-and-file soldier, with a view not only in making him a more conscious citizen after the Civil War was over who would, hopefully, play an important

role in the future building of Soviet power in the villages and small towns of the USSR, but, in the short run, would make him a more effective fighting tool, more able to carry out more complex written orders and instructions from his commanding officers and the military commissars, as well. The more literate the army, the more responsive it would be to the demands for more complex military manoeuvres-a maxim that had been long established in other armies throughout Europe. Thus, when looking at the sections that follow, which examine in more detail the work of PUR *and* the Red Army's cultural-educational apparatus, always remember that all the money spent on the theatres and clubs and schools were designed to do two things: .

- 1)make the Red Army soldier a more conscious soldier, more adept at coping with the demands of modern warfare for a literate recruit, able to read and write and more able to carry out more complex orders, than had previously been possible;

- 2)following on from the above, when the war was over, at least the soldiers, returning home to their villages and small towns, would ensure that the Bolsheviks had a potentially sound basis of support in the various small villages and towns, should the former soldiers be required to serve on the rural or town soviets. It would be no surprise, although well outwith the scope of this work, if

research carried out on the heads of the rural soviets and similar such bodies, in the 1920s, found that the majority of them had saw some form of service in the Red Army during the Civil War. That being the case, one could postulate further on the importance of PUR's educational and political campaigns and the future construction of the Soviet state, long after PUR's role in the Civil War.

However, to return to the theme of this work, PUR noted its achievements in the sphere of political and cultural-educational work in the Red Army at the Second All-Russian Congress of Political Workers of the Red Army and Fleet in December 1920 and it is to that we now turn.

(iv) PUR and the achievements of the Red Army's political and cultural-educational apparatus(1920)

In its report to the Second All-Russian Congress of Political Workers of the Red Army and Fleet(hereinafter referred to simply as the Congress), presented in December 1920 in Moscow⁴⁰, PUR listed, both by sections and in a general format, its successes in the areas of political and cultural-educational work in the Red Army for 1920. However, one point that should be made here is that at this Congress, PUR would appear to have taken quite a

hammering from the Congress delegates and, in his address to the delegates, Smilga was not slow in apportioning blame where he thought it belonged.⁴¹ That will be discussed in greater detail below but, it should not be forgotten that although the statistics would appear impressive, for a number of the actual delegates at the Congress, they would appear to have proven very little.

In order to make the material a little more easier to absorb, a number of sub-divisions will appear in this part of the dissertation, based on the presentation adopted in the original 1921 version of PUR's report to the Congress, therefore, the first sub-division will analyse the agitational-propaganda work of PUR in 1920.

Agitational-propaganda work of PUR in 1920

Beginning with the sectional report of the agitation and propaganda section, the report noted that:

in 1920, the main work of the section lay in the drawing up of the theses, programmes, prospectuses for the direction and leadership of the agitational campaigns. The fulfilment of this work was badly hampered by the poor link with the localities and the inadequate number of workers.⁴²

This section, apparently, was also in charge of the distribution of agitational literature over all the fronts and in the rear:

the section exercised control over the activity of the Military bureau of Tsentropechat, concerning the distribution of agitational literature. The literature was distributed as follows:

to the political departments of the Western Front-30%, to the political departments of the South-Western Front-30%, to the other field units-15%, to the sectors of Troops for the Internal Security of the Republic-7%, to the political departments of the okrug military districts-5%, to the political departments of the guberniya military districts-10%, to the Moscow units-3%.

From January to October[1920-SM], the total figure sent out was 14,906,350 copies.⁴⁴

If nothing else, what these figures and calculations go to prove is the preponderance of quite a fair size staff, able to collate such information and analyse where the literature was being sent! As stated earlier and certainly something which PUR was never able quite to shake off, PUR could be, in many ways, just as bureaucratic as the other organs of the Soviet state!

PUR's Courses' sectional work for 1920

The next section to make its report was the courses section-according to the latter, there were some 224 courses operating in both the rear and front Red Army

units by November 1920.⁴⁴ What is interesting about the report of this particular section is the fact that it identified the existence of a number of Red Army universities, one of which still survives, obviously in a greatly amended form to this day. The N.G.Tolmachev Petrograd Red Army Institute, as it was then called, has become the Soviet Army's main academy for the training and instruction of today's political officers, namely, the V.I.Lenin Military-Political Academy(Order of Lenin).⁴⁵

It was probably also this section, though there is no definite confirmation of this in the report, that was in charge of the various schools and courses of political literacy in the Red Army.⁴⁶ It should be stressed that these schools and courses were run independently of the ordinary literacy schools and were designed, on the whole, to raise the political consciousness of the soldier. By August 1920, in both the rear and front-line military units, there were 361 schools of political literacy, with a "student" population approaching 14,254 men.⁴⁷ If we compare this figure with the relevant figures for the ordinary schools, then we come across a huge gulf between the two types of school-by August 1920, the number of ordinary schools had reached 5,000 with a "student" population of some 112,000 men.⁴⁸ It would be interesting to know what happened to the graduates of these political courses-were they used in the political apparatus of the

Red Army directly? For those that survived the Civil War, what then? Chairmanship of a rural soviet, perhaps?

PUR and the construction of the Red Army library system in 1920

Overall, it would appear that libraries in the Red Army would appear to have received special treatment from PUR. In some respects, this should not come about as too much of a surprise, given their importance to the work of so many parts of the Red Army's cultural and educational apparatus, eg, the schools, the clubs, the political departments. etc. In 1920, for instance, PUR published a small book, with a total circulation figure of 40,000 copies no less, entitled, "guidance for Library Workers of the Red Army", in which was detailed all the necessary information to help establish, or run, libraries in the Red Army!⁴⁹ The booklet even included a mini-classification system for all the books that the Red Army library might have in stock!⁵⁰ The importance of the library, even a small one, was not to be ignored:

the Red Army library, even with a small number of books, can and must strive to be at the centre of all political-educational work of the unit.⁵¹

In general, the tasks of the Red Army libraries were five-fold:

- 1) to give general knowledge, even if it is only elementary, but necessary to everyone, and in all areas of knowledge;
- 2) to help readers work out a proletarian Communist world outlook;
- 3) to aid the improvement of the daily routine of work;
- 4) to attract the reader to actively participate in the organisation of political-educational work of the library amongst the masses;
- 5) to help the reader learn how to read.⁵²

Having discussed these general tasks of the Red Army libraries, the booklet then went on to discuss the proper value of each of the books that the librarian may want to put on his shelves, helping the librarian question the suitability of the books on offer. PUR recommended the librarian to ask himself the following questions:

- 1) What are the main questions tackled by the author of the book?
- 2) Has he tackled them correctly?
- 3) In compiling the book, what was the aim of the author?
- 4) What type of reader will be interested in it and who could the book be recommended to?⁵³

The librarian was also asked to ponder one further point - in discussing the content of the book, could it be discussed openly with one's brother and/or/sister, as well as one's comrades?⁵⁴ It can only be assumed, however, that in judging which book could be put on the shelves and which could not, on a lot of occasions, the individual judgement of the librarian was used.

In examining the actual number of libraries in the Red Army during the Civil War, it would appear that the figures for the number of Red Army libraries during the Civil War would show that they were fairly popular amongst the men. In October 1919, according to PUR's own figures, the number of libraries in the Red Army was 7,500, an increase of over 5,500 on the figure recorded in October 1918.⁵⁵ However, even such a large figure as had been recorded in October 1919 was not to represent the largest number of libraries in the Red Army: according to a number of early sources, the largest number of libraries recorded in all units of the Red Army, both on the front and in the rear, was 10,029 in July 1920.⁵⁶

The volume of literature sent out to the front clearly shows that the central authorities were more interested in meeting the demands of the front than the rear. According to one table, reproduced in the April 1920 issue of "Politrabotnik", 8,245,124 rubles worth of literature (the latter term is used in the broadest possible sense) was sent to meet the needs of the front in 1919 alone⁵⁷; the corresponding figure for the rear military districts was 4,389,460 rubles.⁵⁸ In other words, if the grand total of literature sent to the fronts, the rear military districts, the special units, etc., amounted to (1919) 16,005,204 rubles, then the value of the literature sent to the fronts amounts to over 51% of this grand total.

In overall terms, the supply of literature to the Red Army was measured in astronomical figures. In its report for 1920, PUR's Literary-publications' department stated that in the year, beginning in June 1919 and ending in June 1920, 18.8 million pieces of literature were sent to the Red Army, including over 5 million books and brochures, over 1 million issues of the Red Army journal, "Krasnoarmeets", over 8 million leaflets and proclamations, etc.⁵⁹ Amongst the more curious items sent to the Red Army units and included in this overall grand total were 20,000 portraits of Trotsky-it is unlikely that any of these would have survived the Stalin years.⁶⁰ All of this literature was both distributed and produced by PUR itself and amongst the contributors working for PUR and writing for a number of the works mentioned were V.A.Antonov-Ovseenko, M.S.Olminsky, D.S.Moor, V.P.Denisov, etc.⁶¹

The total number of books sent to the Red Army, again especially to the fronts, was astronomical. According to one Soviet historian's research in the archives, between January 1919-December 1919, the Red Army received 14 million books, more than half of which went to the two main fronts of the Civil War in 1919, the Ukrainian and the Southern Fronts.⁶² In terms of the overall best supplied military district then, not surprisingly enough, this turned out to be the Moscow Military District, which,

in 1919 alone, received 4 million books.⁶³ Unfortunately, it is not presently possible to say with any accuracy exactly what types of books were being sent to the Red Army libraries during the 1918-1920; the earliest such figures on this particular area refer to 1921 but, since the latter is not too far removed from the main period of our study, they are hereby enclosed:

by January 1921, 31.8% of all books in Red Army libraries were fictional, 30.1% were general knowledge and the remaining 38.1% did not fall into either category.⁶⁴

PUR and the work of the Red Army clubs(1920)

In December 1919, the First All-Russian Congress of Political-Educational Workers of the Red Army had stated the following about the overall importance of clubs to the Red Army:

they[the Red Army clubs-SM]are the hearths of socialist culture and a centre for the political education and self-development[of the soldiers-SM].⁶⁵

There had been a spectacular rise in the growth of the number of clubs in the Red Army-the 1920 report on PUR's activity showed that between January-November 1920, the number of clubs increased from 1,315 to 2,430(an increase, in percentage terms, of 85%).⁶⁶

In this context, it should be remembered that the club could virtually be anything that the soldiers wanted to make it, i.e. it did not simply refer to a stationary building, but could well be mobile, possibly even a tent, which could be set up quite easily and administer to the needs of the soldiers in which ever way it could. Despite the importance of the clubs as far as the Congress was concerned, one early account of the history of the clubs stated that:

during the Civil war, the clubs were not able to develop widely among the field units, as the units were never long in one place. The figures for 1918-1920 show that in the overwhelming number of cases, the clubs operated in the rear, reserve units. In the field units there were mobile clubs, but their number was insignificant.⁶⁷

If this was the case, this would help to explain why there is so little information available on the activity of the clubs in the primary source material consulted for this work. It certainly would appear that the clubs had an importance relative to the rear military units, rather than at the front. Certainly, there is no indication of how many Red Army soldiers used the clubs. As regards the activity of the clubs, then the only information available concerns 1918, well outside of this period, but it would appear to show that the activity of the clubs concerned reading lectures to the soldiers, formation of Red Army drama groups, encouraging the soldiers to take up playing chess and forego the pleasures of playing cards, etc.⁶⁸

Thus, whilst it is not possible to analyse in any detail the work of the Red Army clubs, judging by what has been described, it certainly would appear that they played a more important role in the affairs of the Red Army where the Red Army units themselves were of a more settled nature, i.e. in the rear. Hence, the lack of any mention of their activities in the front military units. However, more primary source has to be made available before anything more substantive can be said.

PUR and other aspects of the cultural-educational activity of the Red Army(1919-1920)

In an article written in 1924 by Vl.Faydysh, the latter quoted the statistics for the number of Red Army choirs, theatres, drama groups, etc., in the Red Army by June 1920:

in the rear, in the 12 military districts, there were 624 theatres, of which 292 were professional and 326 were amateur, created by the soldiers themselves, 767 choirs and musical circles. 2,209 performances and 722 concerts were given. At the front, in the field armies, there were 401 drama groups, 510 choirs and musical groups, 767 performances and concerts were given.⁶⁹

Although little can be said about the musical side of the cultural-educational activity of the Red Army at this

time, the point about the role of the theatres can be expanded. In examining the importance of the theatres, one early primary source reveals the actual thinking behind the creation of a theatre for the soldiers at the front by a Political department of an Army:

a great plan had been thought out at the centre-i.e. by the Political department of the Army-to create a model worker-peasants' company, to create a number of complete, artistic productions, creating a mobile set, which would meet all the demands of all of the productions, and then send it all off to the front. At the beginning of July[1919-SM], such a company was sent to the front and had colossal agitational and artistic-educational significance.⁷⁰

The latter extract was taken from a work, published in 1920, on the early history of political work in the 1st Army. However, even although there is no indication of the numbers of Red Army soldiers who attended the performances of the theatre, it would appear that the theatre was not without success and, given that there was little live entertainment, it can be assumed that the theatre would be able to attract the soldiers along.

Another couple of interesting pieces of information on the work of the theatres in the Red Army, again as revealed by the political establishment of the period(Northern Front, to be precise)shows the general thinking behind the work of the Red Army theatres:

the Political-educational administration of the Petrograd Military District is going to organise a theatre of political satire for the Red Army soldiers. The repertoire will be composed in the spirit of the Marxist

theatres and will answer the political needs of the day. For the opening of the theatre, the play "Petrushka molodets-krasniy udalets"[the title of the play could be translated colloquially, something in the manner of "Good man, Peter-a brave Red man."-SM] will be performed.⁷¹

The fact that plays had to be performed which were overtly political is further revealed by the following interesting statement banning the performance of a couple of works by a particular playwright who, obviously, did not conform to the requirements of the Red Army's theatre:

the Political-educational committee of the Petrograd Revolutionary Labour Army wishes to make it known to all theatrical organisations of the army that the plays: 'Demokrat, Kontuzheniy' ['The Democrat Kontuzheniy'] and 'Sokrovishche' ['Treasure'], the works of Kireyev-Gatchinsk, are forbidden to appear on the stages of Red Army theatres.⁷²

Thus, judging by these extracts, it would appear to confirm the political nature of the Red Army theatres and their intention to inculcate into the soldiers an extra dose of political propaganda. Given the nature of the struggle between the Red and White forces, this should not come about as too much of a surprise. After all, it was a time in which a lot of the issues that the Bolsheviks were fighting for could easily be seen in black-and-white terms and it was also important that, in whatever guise or form, the soldiers realised the immensity of the task that lay before them and exactly what it was that the Bolsheviks were trying to achieve. Hence, works which did not portray the world, or the conflict, in the terms that the

Bolsheviks wanted or needed, were simply banned from the Red Army stage and that was the end of the matter.

Thus, in general, if one was to briefly summarise the main purpose of all this general political-educational and cultural-educational work, one would have to bear in mind that its main purpose was to make the men more politically and culturally aware, hence the political content of the plays, for instance, as well as the political content of the cinema films, shown to captivated Red Army audiences. However, increasing their overall awareness of what was happening round about them was also designed to make them more effective fighting soldiers and although there would appear to be little concrete evidence to prove this, nevertheless it is a point well worth making. All the money spent on political-educational and cultural-educational work in the Red Army cannot be easily explained, if one does not think that there was a military value to it all, as well as the more obvious cultural and political benefits. If soldiers were more conscious of why they were fighting and given the figures concerning the class composition of the units which were the best disciplined or had the most number of Communists in the ranks, there is a basis to suppose this to have been the case, then they could handle more complex military manoeuvres more easily. However, the lynchpin to all of the political-educational and cultural-educational work in

the Red Army and its eventual importance has to be analysis of the basic literacy rates in the Red Army throughout the Civil War and it is too that we now turn.

The campaign to abolish illiteracy in the Red Army(1919-1920)

Before beginning to examine the whole anti-illiteracy campaign conducted under PUR in 1919-1920, it would probably be helpful to put the whole campaign into some sort of general political and military context. Lenin, himself, in a number of significant remarks on the need for a more literate society, realised the importance of teaching literacy throughout the length of the Civil War- in one of his sharper and more memorable comments on the whole need for a literate people, he once said:

in the land of the illiterate, it will be impossible to build the Communist society.⁷³

In another, more detailed remark on the above, Lenin said that:

whilst in the country there is still such a phenomenon as illiteracy, it is extremely difficult to talk about political education. It is not simply a political problem, but it is a condition in which it is impossible to talk about politics. The illiterate man stands outwith the political arena, he must, first of all, study his abc.

Without the latter, there can be no politics, without this[literacy-SM]there exists only rumours, gossip, fairy tales, prejudices, but no politics.⁷⁴

Thus, if the problem had worried Lenin to this extent, it is not surprising that the Red Army's political apparatus had taken a number of important steps towards eradicating illiteracy from the Red Army's ranks as soon as humanly possible.

Due to the distinct lack of work in this particular area, some of the necessary statistical information may well seem to be of dubious value. For instance, in one of the very few works actually published on the subject, one author(A.Vyrvich) has stated that the illiteracy rate in the Red Army in 1918 was 80%.⁷⁵ Unfortunately, Vyrvich did not actually produce any supporting evidence to justify what must be seen as a high figure. If we take the figures for the ordinary civilian population as a backdrop, then we find little evidence which actually does support the possibility that so many of the soldiers could have been illiterate, unless the definition applied to the Red Army was extremely vigorous, more so than that applied to the civilian population of the time. In general, estimates of the illiteracy rate amongst the population at the time of the revolution are in the region of 60-62%, with lower rates being recorded for men and men in towns, in particular.⁷⁶ Thus, it is hard to see, especially as Vyrvich did not name any source for his statistic, why the

rate of illiteracy should have been so high in the Red Army in 1918.

A few months after the creation of PUR in May 1919, RVSR published an order "on the liquidation of illiteracy" from the ranks of the Red Army in September 1919.⁷⁷ It was a comparatively long and detailed order, examining the role of the local political and cultural-educational apparatus and how it was expected to combat illiteracy amongst the men. Vyrvich has stated that the order was important for two main reasons:

firstly, it stated that the struggle for literacy in the Red Army had begun earlier than it had among the civilian population...secondly, the order marked an important date in the history of the Red Army, because it laid the foundation for the organised and planned struggle for the liquidation of illiteracy among the Red Army soldiers.⁷⁸

Strictly speaking, Vyrvich was not correct in his assertion that the fight against illiteracy amongst the civilian population was begun later than amongst the Red Army soldiers-in April 1918, the People's Commissariat of Education passed a decree establishing centres for fighting illiteracy amongst the masses⁷⁹, although certainly it was not until December 1919 that a wholesale measure was adopted, intended to eliminate illiteracy from the entire civilian population in all areas of the Republic.⁸⁰

The September 1919 order stated that, initially, the most important thing to do, right away, was to register

all illiterate Red Army soldiers, based in the rear army units:

with the aim of the quickest possible liquidation of illiteracy from the ranks of the Red Army soldiers, it is suggested to all the political administrations of the okrug and the political-educational departments of the guberniya, uezd and city military commissariats that:

- 1) to instruct all the cultural-educational commissions, and where these do not exist the political commissars, under the personal responsibility of this order, to make up a register of all the illiterate Red Army soldiers, located in the military districts...
- 2) on analysis of the results of the register, to proceed quickly to the organisation of lessons for the illiterates, where these have not already been organised.⁸¹

Such lessons were to be ideally carried out by a specially appointed "cultural worker" from within the unit itself, but where a suitably qualified person could not be found, then the units could approach another unit, or invite people from outside the Red Army to fill the gap.⁸² These cultural workers, depending on whether they were Red Army soldiers co-opted for such work, or people specially invited to take on such work, received 350 rubles a month, or the rate of pay as set by the relevant statute of the People's Commissariat of Education.⁸³

To assist the work of the cultural workers, the commissar was instructed to appoint a number of assistants from the units, relative to the number of illiterate soldiers in the units; the necessary teaching equipment was to be supplied by the political-educational and cultural-educational commissions.⁸⁴ The actual lessons

for the illiterate soldiers were to be carried out on a regular basis, but were designed not to disrupt the normal, military routine of the unit:

13. The literacy lessons should be carried out daily, excepting holidays, two hours per day or three hours per day, four days per week.

14. The literacy lessons must not disrupt or weaken the military training, thus it is proposed that the literacy lessons be carried out in the morning before the beginning of rifle training, or two hours after the completion of the latter.⁸⁵

The work of the classes depended on the exact state of the students' illiteracy, so to speak-there were those who were completely illiterate(1st group) and those who were able to read slightly(2nd group). The basic aims of the first group were:

a)to make out what has been written, to be able to write their name, patronymic, surname, unit, address, a letter in a few words and write manuals of numeration up to 1,000;

b)for the second group-read and in their own words, explain what they have read, write a letter, a service report and add and subtract numbers up to 1,000.⁸⁶

The order also mentioned that the lessons of political literacy for the Red Army soldiers could be included in the overall total of hours allocated to teach the men ordinary literacy.⁸⁷ Soldiers, who were either illiterate or barely literate were required to learn their basic political literacy by reading the speeches and brochures of prominent Soviet leaders.⁸⁸

The second last point of the order reinforced the

proposition that all the relevant political and cultural-educational institutions were to spare no effort in liquidating illiteracy from the ranks of the Red Army:

22. The efforts of all the cultural-educational commissions, political-educational departments and political administrations must be directed to the gradual liquidation of illiteracy in the Red Army.⁸⁹

That a number of important successes were conducted in the anti-illiteracy campaign is testified by the following facts:

in the garrison of Nizhny Novgorod, for instance, in January 1919, out of a grand total of 7,500 men, only 180 studied to be literate. However, by December 1919, no doubt partially due to the increased importance attached to the campaign by PUR and the other relevant organs, although the garrison had been increased to 16,000 men, the number of soldiers studying to be literate increased dramatically from 180 to 9,372 (well over half of the garrison, in other words).⁹⁰ Not only was such success recorded in the rear military units either-in the 15th Army, for instance, by December 1919, there were some 96 schools serving the needs of the army.⁹¹ Roughly at this time, the number of men actually in 15th Army was over 32,000.⁹² However, in January 1920, the number of schools in 15th Army increased to 252.⁹³ However, as the number of schools increased, so too did the number of men in the army-by January 1920, this had increased to over 60,000.⁹⁴

According to one report, due to the work of both the local and the central powers, illiteracy was totally wiped out in one division of the 15th Army, namely the 11th division.⁹⁵ Thus, it would appear that as events began to gradually develop from September 1919 onwards, the anti-illiteracy campaign was beginning to make its mark. All the more confusing as to why there seems to be a degree of confusion concerning the number of literacy schools in the Red Army and the number of soldiers studying in them.

One Soviet military historian, V.G.Kolychev, has produced the following table on the number of literacy schools and the number of soldiers attending them during the end of 1918-the end of 1920:

	End of 1918	1.VI 1919	1.X 1919	1.I 1920	VIII-XI 1920
Literacy schools	444	674	1,566	2,328	5,952

96

In the range of sources used in the compilation of his table, Kolychev used a number of periodicals and journals which it has been possible to check. In checking through these sources, a number of discrepancies have been noted in Kolychev's figures and, given the past thoroughness of both the author and the sources used, this is very difficult to explain.

In the report presented by Rakovsky at the First All-

Russian Congress of Political Workers of the Red Army(December 1919), previously examined, the figures listed for the number of Red Army schools were 674(May 1919), but 3,800(October 1919).⁹⁷ That is a very significant increase in Kolychev's estimate and, at present, is impossible to verify. What is also interesting is that in a re-published report on PUR's activity during the Civil War, the number of literacy schools for October 1919 is listed as 1,566.⁹⁸ So, in effect, we have two primary and one secondary sources conflicting markedly with one another on one particular statistic-with no explanation, or acknowledgement by the secondary source as to why there is such a discrepancy. In a recent encyclopaedic entry on this particular subject, PUR's figure of 3,800 is quoted as representing the number of literacy schools in the Red Army for October 1919, so it would seem to show that the confusion does remain.⁹⁹ However, the steady increase in both the number of schools and students in 1920 is further revealed in a report that PUR presented to the Second All-Russian Congress of Political Workers of the Red Army and Fleet in December 1920:

	schools	students
July	4,400	108,000
August	5,000	112,000
September	5,120	115,000
October	5,500	118,000
November	5,952	120,000

100

Thus, on the basis of these figures, it is possible to calculate the average size of the classes: the largest number of students per class belongs to the figures for July 1920, when the average size was 24.5 students per class; the lowest figure per class belonged to the figures for November 1920, when the average size worked out at 20.1 students per class. Over the full five-month period, the average size worked out at 22 students per class-thus, although this would not appear to have been many students, in actual fact, this was double the recommended size per class laid down in the order of September 1919.

PUR's report of 1920 also made mention of the number of teachers in the Red Army-by the end of 1920, there were 6,230 teachers serving in the various Red Army units.¹⁰¹ Of this particular figure, 82%(5,152)were cultural workers assigned specifically to combat the problem of illiteracy in the Red Army. By any standard, this was a considerable human investment. PUR is also recorded as having sent a further 143 cultural workers to the Western Front and another 125 cultural workers to the South-Western Front to help further the fight against illiteracy there.

The fight against illiteracy continued with a further reorganisational shuffle at the centre, apparently, in July 1920. On the 22nd July 1920, PUR created the Central Commission for the Liquidation of Illiteracy from the Red Army and Fleet.¹⁰² However, despite the creation of this

particular organ, it would appear that problems still remained with the fight against illiteracy in the Red Army-in October 1920, PUR issued another order, condemning the relevant local authorities for not carrying out past orders on the liquidation of illiteracy from Red Army units with the necessary vigour.¹⁰³ As further sign of the lack of success of the commission, Vyrvich reports that the commission was disbanded a little after 6 months of operation.¹⁰⁴

However, even though one commission may have found the going too tough for its own survival, nevertheless, the whole campaign can be judged to have been a success. After all, even if it cannot be said with any great degree of certainty what the illiteracy rate of the Red Army was in 1918, it is true to say that, by 1921, the rate of illiteracy had fallen to 8.2, ¹⁰⁵ and was to continue to fall throughout the 1920s. Therefore, it can be assumed that PUR and the local organs did lay a good basis for the future conduct of the anti-illiteracy campaign, carried on through the 1920s and beyond.

The whole significance of the anti-illiteracy campaign was that it was a direct way of increasing the consciousness of the ordinary rank and file, from which so much could follow. If the soldiers could read and write, even at a basic level, then it meant that they could carry out more complex military orders and instructions; they

could be politically educated with more ease and to a greater effect and, last but by no means least, the other aspects of the cultural-educational programmes going on all around them would be more accessible. They would be able to understand more what was going on. Gusev, who admittedly cannot be held up as an unbiased source on the political and cultural-educational work being carried out in the Red Army, once wrote in 1921 that:

the strength of the Bolsheviks lies in the consciousness of its bayonets.¹⁰⁶

In many ways, this was the whole *raison d'être* for the whole basis of the conduct of the political and cultural-educational work carried out in the Red Army in 1918-1920. The Bolsheviks were convinced, and spent vast sums of money to back-up the entire political and cultural-educational apparatus, to make the soldiers more aware of what they were fighting for, why they were fighting and who would be the main beneficiaries if the Bolsheviks won/lost the Civil War. The literacy campaign played an important role in trying to impart the rudiments of reading and writing to men who, before, probably knew very little beyond a very small geographical and political confine. In one remarkable article, written in 1920, by a man with obvious experience of teaching ordinary peasant soldiers at the front, the problems posed by men largely ignorant of many things, but prepared to fight and die for

their country, comes through very graphically:

the teacher, regardless of where he is, must come to terms with his audience, not only in relation of how to teach, but also what to teach. The Red Army audience is not a university, it is not a labour school, nor is it even a series of courses for workers, where students attend because they want to attend.

The teacher must give the Red Army soldier what he wants. It would be too harsh to force the soldiers, often facing death, having to suffer both cold and hunger, to compel him to listen to something that he is not interested in.¹⁰⁷

Thus, in the experience of this particular teacher, the soldiers were far from being the dark, ignorant masses, portrayed of old, if the topic that was being taught interested them. He found that the peasant soldiers were more interested in learning about the origins of the earth, the reasons for the appearance of night and day, the rise of Christianity, the essence and tasks of the Soviet state, etc.¹⁰⁸ There was a consciousness there, the main work of the Red Army's political and cultural-educational apparatus was to tap it and develop it, hence the importance of not only the anti-illiteracy campaign, but all the other political and cultural-educational activities carried out in the Red Army during 1919-1920.

(iv)The restructuring of the Red Army's political and cultural-educational apparatus(September-November 1920)

As the Civil War drew to a close and the fighting became less intense at the front, so the demand for a reappraisal of the Red Army's political and cultural-educational apparatus came to the fore. This was largely brought about by the success of PUR itself during 1919-1920; as one prominent spokesman at the time hinted:

military practice has put forward completely new methods of approach to cultural-educational work among the masses.¹⁰⁹ Military practice has taught us how to plan work.

However, it is difficult to say definitely whether the views of the top leadership of PUR were taken into account in the overall drafting of the decree in September-November 1920. All that can be said is the fact that when the organ's new collegium met in November 1920, V.I.Soloviev was present, representing PUR.¹¹⁰ How PUR was represented in the drafting of the decree in September-October 1920 is not recorded.

On 27th September 1920, VTsIK passed a resolution entitled "the unification of all political-educational work of the Republic and the more planned and coordinated application to this work of the personnel and material

resources and the establishment, under the control of the People's Commissariat of Education, the Main Political-Educational Committee of the Republic."¹¹¹

(In order to save repetition, the Main Political...will be hereinafter referred to simply by the English transliteration of the Russian abbreviation, "Glavpolitprosvet").

VTsIK then instructed the People's Commissariat of Education to work out a decree on the basis of the above resolution and, on the 25th October 1920, the decree was ready ~~for~~ discussion by the CC and the Politburo.¹¹² The draft of the decree was then discussed by the Politburo and, on the 28th October 1920, the Politburo resolved that all work on the draft of the decree was to be completed by 2nd November 1920.¹¹³ By the 10th November, all work on the decree was completed and on the 12th November 1920, Lenin signed the decree that brought Glavpolitprosvet into formal existence.¹¹⁴ The first few points of the decree establish the latter's importance for this particular work:

1. For the unification of all the political-educational, agitational-educational work in the Republic and for the concentration of it in the service of the political and economic construction of the country, under the control of the People's Commissariat of Education, the Main Political-Educational Committee of the Republic(Glavpolitprosvet)is created.
2. In accordance with its task, Glavpolitprosvet organisationally unites, above all, the political-educational work of the People's Commissariat of Education, PUR, the All-Russian Central Executive

Committee, the Main Political Administration for Communications, the All-Russian central soviet of Trade Unions, the Central Committee of the Union of Youth.¹¹⁵

However, this did not spell the death of PUR as yet-as contained in point 5 of the decree, PUR was still to be left in charge of political work in the front Red Army units, a tacit realisation of PUR's general success in this particular area. However, all political and cultural-educational work in the rear military districts and units, which had been formerly conducted by PUR, was to be taken over by the new organ:

political-educational work in the rear military districts will now be completely transferred to the control of Glavpolitprosvet and the corresponding organs of PUR will fuse with the apparatus of Glavpolitprosvet.¹¹⁶

Thus, whilst PUR was to be left in charge of political work at the front, another point of the decree stated that even in this area, PUR's work was to be subordinated to the leadership of Glavpolitprosvet.¹¹⁷ Exactly what this meant is difficult to fathom from the context of the decree itself. Did it mean exactly what it implied, that PUR was now to be subordinated completely to the interests of the new organ, with no freedom of manoeuvre? Or did it mean simply that PUR was now to be more responsive to the demands of the central political-educational apparatus and would still be in a position of relative autonomy in the conduct of political work in the field Red Army units?

Unfortunately, given the continuing lack of information on PUR, even after the ending of the Civil War, these questions will have to remain presently unanswered. However, in general, with the creation of Glavpolitprosvet, political and cultural-educational work in the Red Army entered a new phase, not too unlike what had gone before, but different in its essence and aims. The ending of the Civil War brought new problems for the Red Army's political apparatus to solve; within a few years, the Red Army itself was to undergo a whole series of drastic military reforms and, for a while at least, the Red Army's political apparatus seemed to disappear from view. New leaders were to take over the running of the Red Army's main political organ, in many ways, just as able as Smilga and the Civil War entourage had shown themselves to be. It was even to play a role in the political infighting that was to take place in the late twenties but, for the time being at least, it was to enter a less hectic phase of its history.

The Civil war had saw the political apparatus grow and grow, both in terms of staff, budgets, work,etc., but to what avail was all this? That will be the subject of the final, conclusive chapter of this work.

NOTES(1):-

1. "Politrabotnik", No.4-5, M.1924, p.20.
2. Ibid.
3. "X let Krasnoi Armii. Albom diagram." M.1928, p.42.
4. "Politrabotnik", No.1, M.1920, p.9.
5. "X let...", M.1928, p.42.
6. V.G.Kolychev, "Partiino-politicheskaya rabota v Krasnoi Armii v gody grazhdanskoi voyny. 1918-1920." M.1979, p.103.
7. "X let...", M.1928, p.42.
8. "Direktivy komandovaniya frontov Krasnoi Armii(1917-1922 gg). Sbornik dokumentov v 4-kh tomakh." Vol.4, M.1978, p.255.
9. Ibid.
10. "X let...", M.1928, p.42.
11. Yu.P.Petrov, "Stroitelstvo politorganov, partiynykh i komsomolskikh organizatsiy Armii i Flota." M.1968, pp.9-10.
12. "Direktivy komandovaniya...", M.1978, p.257; Kolychev, "Partiino-politicheskaya rabota...", M.1979, p.103; "Partiino-politicheskaya rabota v Krasnoi Armii(mart 1919-1920 gg.). Dokumenty." Vol.2, M.1964, pp.156-7.
13. "Politrabotnik", No.9, M.1920, p.14.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. "Politiko-prosvetitelnaya rabota v Krasnoi Armii(1918-1920 gg.)." "Istoricheskii arkhiv", No.6, M.1959, pp.19-42.
17. Ibid., p.33.
18. Ibid.
19. "Direktivy komandovaniya...", M.1978, p.248; pp.254-5.

NOTES(2):-

20. "Direktivy komandovaniya...", vol.4, p.247.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
24. G.Lindov, "O politicheskoi rabote i politicheskikh rabotnikakh na fronte." Kharkov, 1919, p.4.
25. A.Slavatinsky, "Rol kommunista v stroitelstve Krasnoi Armii", ('Revoliutsiya i voina. Oktyabr 1917-1921.') Smolensk, 1921, p.12.
26. S.Gusev, "Obespecheniye Krasnoi Armii kommunistami", ('Politvestnik', M.1921, p.1).
27. S.S.Khromov, "Grazhdanskaya voina i voennaya interventsia. Entsiklopediya." 1st ed., M.1983, p.162.
28. Gusev, "Obespecheniye...", M.1921, p.1.
29. V.Chernevsky, "Desyat let partiinoi organizatsii", ('Voenny Vestnik', No.6, M.1928, pp.19-21).
30. Ibid., p.19.
31. Ibid.
32. Petrov, "Stroitelstvo politorganakh...", M.1968, p.110.
33. S.S.Khromov, "Grazhdanskaya voina i voennaya interventsia. Entsiklopediya." 2nd ed., M.1987, p.666.
34. Chernovsky, "Desyat let...", M.1928, p.20.
35. Ch.Rakovsky, "Dusha pobedy. K istorii Krasnoi Armii." ('Kommunisticheskii internatsional', No.13, M.1920, p.2505).
36. Sheila Fitzpatrick, "The Commissariat of Enlightenment." Cambridge, 1970, p.291.
37. G.Leggett, "The Cheka. Lenin's Political Police." London, 1982, p.207.
38. "Politrabotnik", No.2, M.1920, pp.8-9.

NOTES(3):-

39. "Izvestiya Narodnogo Komissariata po Voennym Delam."
12.12.1919.
40. "Politrabotnik", No.1, M.1921, pp.1-19.
41. Ibid., pp.1-3.
42. Ibid., p.2.
43. Ibid.
44. Ibid., p.3.
45. Ibid.
46. Ibid.
47. Ibid.
48. Ibid.
49. "Rukovodstvo dlya bibliotekary Krasnoi Armii." Orel,
1920, pp.1-25.
50. Ibid., pp.10-16.
51. Ibid., p.3.
52. Ibid.
53. Ibid., p.5.
54. Ibid., p.6.
55. "X let...", M.1928, p.65.
56. Ibid.
57. "Politrabotnik", No.3, M.1920, p.10.
58. Ibid.
59. Ibid., No.1, M.1921, p.4.
60. Ibid.
61. Ibid.

NOTES(4):-

62. M.Savinsky, "Zarozhdeniye bibliotechnogo dela v Krasnoi Armii(1918-1920 gg.)" 'Voenno-itsoricheskii zhurnal', No.3, M.1977, pp.94-7).
63. Ibid., p.94.
64. "X let...", M.1928, p.69.
65. "Politrabotnik", No.1, M.1920, p.17.
66. Ibid., No.1, M.1921, p.4.
67. "Voenniy Vestnik", No.4, M.1928, p.55.
68. "Vooruzheniy Narod", 3.12.1918.
69. "Politrabotnik", No.4-5, M.1924, p.34.
70. "Godovshchina pervoi revoliutsionnoi armii." M.1920, p.43.
71. "Boevaya Pravda", 6.4.1920.
72. Ibid., 15.4.1920.
73. V.I.Lenin, "Polnoye sobranie sochineniy", Vol.41, M.1981, p.315.
74. Lenin, ibid., vol.44, p.174.
75. A.Vyrvich, "Krasnaya Armiya v borbe s negramotnostiu." M.1925, p.22.
76. Yu.A.Polyakov, "Perekhod k Nepu i sovetskoe krestyanstvo." M.1967, pp.185-89.
77. "Partiino-politicheskaya rabota...", vol.2, pp.42-5.
78. Vyrvich, ibid., p.27.
79. W.Shimoniak, "Communist Education: its History, Philosophy and Politics." Chicago, 1970, p.68.
80. "Dekrety Sovetskoi vlasti." Vol.7, M.1974, pp.50-1.
81. "Partiino-politicheskaya rabota...", vol.2, M.1964, p.42.

NOTES(5):-

82. "Partiino-politicheskaya rabota...", vol.2, p.43.
83. Ibid.
84. Ibid.
85. Ibid., p.44.
86. Ibid.
87. Ibid.
88. Ibid.
89. Ibid., p.45
90. "Politiko-prosvetitelnaya...", M.1959, p.38.
91. Ibid.
92. "Direktivy komandovaniya...", vol.4, p.107.
93. "Politiko-prosvetitelnaya...", M.1959, p.38.
94. "Direktivy komandovaniya...", vol.4, p.117.
95. "Politiko-prosvetitelnaya...", M.1959, p.38
96. Kolychev, "ibid.", p.145.
97. "Politrabotnik", No.1, M.1920, p.12.
98. "Politiko-prosvetitelnaya...", M.1959, p.38.
99. Khromov, ibid., 1st ed., M.1983, p.331.
100. "Politrabotnik", No.1, M.1921, p.3.
101. Ibid.
102. Vyrvich, "Krasnaya Armiya...", M.1925, p.31.
103. Ibid.
104. Ibid., p.41.
105. "Partiino-politicheskaya rabota v Krasnoi Armii. Dokumenty. 1921-1929 gg." M.1981, p.543.

NOTES(6):-

106. S.Gusev, "Uroki grazhdanskoi voiny." M.1958, p.52.
107. "Politrabotnik", No.10, M.1920, p.5.
108. Ibid., p.8.
109. Fitzpatrick, ibid., p.192.
110. Ibid., p.185.
111. "Dekrety Sovetskoi Vlasti." Vol.11, M.1983, p.200.
112. Ibid.
113. Ibid.
114. Ibid., p.201.
115. Ibid., pp.197-8.
116. Ibid., p.199.
117. Ibid.

CHAPTER FOUR-CONCLUSION

As stated in the introduction, the present work was undertaken to analyse the overall history and importance of the Red Army's political apparatus during the Civil War. This subject has not really received a lot of attention in the Western historiography of the Civil War. However, I felt that it was a topic worthy of detailed analysis and examination, especially in view of the importance attached to the Red Army's political apparatus by countless generations of Soviet historians.

In general, it seemed to me that of all the reasons for Bolshevik victory in the Civil War that Soviet historians have examined and analysed over the years, this had not been thoroughly examined by historians of the Civil War period in the West. This was despite the presence of a fairly large body of Soviet material, readily available to the Western scholar for serious examination. However, in evaluating why Western historians had not been too enthusiastic to research this particular topic, I quickly discovered that, although there was a lot of Soviet material available, most of the Soviet writing on the topic had fallen into the same old trap, as had other previous historical accounts of other periods of Soviet history, i.e. that there was one definite line of analysis, concerning the "correct"

interpretation of the history and importance of the Red Army's political apparatus at this time and, needless to say, this was to assert that the Red Army's political apparatus had been an integral part of the development of the Red Army and that, as a creation of the Party, expressing the latter's direct will in the Soviet armed forces, that indeed it had played an extremely important role in the Bolshevik victory. This meant that very little criticism was actually made of the Red Army's Civil War political apparatus and even less effort was spent detailing the debates and issues raised during the actual organisation and functioning of the Red Army's political apparatus. In other words, everything concerning the Red Army's political apparatus during 1918-1920 had been neatly compartmentalised, with little room for questions or criticism.

Thus, on the whole, such histories tended to totally underplay, if not ignore, a number of the issues crucial to a proper understanding of the role of the Red Army's political apparatus and say next to nothing about the arguments and disputes that did occur throughout the history of the Red Army's Civil War political apparatus; ignore the real difficulties that plagued the Red Army's political apparatus, such as the lack of a real, unifying link between the Red Army's centralised political apparatus and the front political apparatus; ignore the

role and work of a number of prominent Bolshevik Party members in the organisation and running of the Red Army's political apparatus, etc. There were so many areas that generations of Soviet historians had virtually failed to analyse properly that I began to wonder whether any of the recent Soviet historical writing on the topic had been worthwhile. I concluded that the main reason why so much of the writing on this subject was not as useful as it could have been must have been simply because such research would have rendered a lot of the Soviet writing on this topic virtually redundant. Another reason as to why this particular topic had been so badly treated in the past was, as had happened in other areas of Soviet history, the dead hand of Stalin still weighed heavily, perhaps even particularly more so on this topic-after all, (as can be shown if one reads a few of the biographies listed in the biographical appendix at the end of this work), a lot of the more prominent members of the Red Army's Civil War political apparatus were murdered at Stalin's instigation in the purges of the 1930s-Smilga, Beloborodov, Smirnov, etc., thus making research on this particular topic not purely an academic matter, but also one that involved a lot of politics and diplomacy.

Thus, it became very clear to me very early on that, on the whole, Soviet historians had found it very uncomfortable to talk and write about the details of the

Red Army's Civil War political apparatus. On a slightly more personal basis, it may even be pertinent to note here that in the preparation of this particular dissertation, the Soviet authorities were not at all keen that I should study this topic as titled. Instead, it was suggested to me that I should restrict my historical "vision", so to speak, to analysing the work of the political apparatus on the Eastern Front during 1918-1920, that I should not attempt to delve too deeply into the wider picture of events. And this occurred only a few years back!

It would appear to be the case that for too long now, Soviet historians have tended to steer away from this particular topic or, at best, have approached it from a "safe" angle, in the sense of repeating what has been said before about the organisation, development and work of the Red Army's Civil War political apparatus, without really analysing what they were writing about in any great depth. In my own previous work on a related topic, I knew that there were still a lot of questions on this whole area that needed to be answered, but not in the spirit of previous historical writing on the topic, but in a much more critical frame. Indeed, curiously enough, such an approach was helped by the fact that, especially in Moscow itself, there was a lot of very interesting material, stored in the libraries and research institutes, waiting to be properly examined and analysed and that such a

study, successfully undertaken, would help Western historians to get a much more complete picture of the Bolshevik war effort in 1918-1920.

Hence, the main drive behind this dissertation has been to re-examine all the evidence currently available and, in many respects, re-write what has previously been written, but in a much more critical and historically accurate way. This should not be taken to imply that this dissertation has been able to answer all the questions posed by examining the work of the Red Army's political apparatus at this time, but for the first time anywhere outside the USSR itself, on the basis of the ground already covered in this work, Western historians can now begin to approach this topic with a degree of confidence.

In examining the creation of the Red Army's political apparatus, the main conclusions of part of this work would have to be that, initially at least, it certainly was not all that well organised, nor indeed would it seem to have performed its duties with any particular distinction. As detailed in the first chapter, it would be very difficult to accept the standard Soviet view that the Organisation-agitation department of the All-Russian Collegiate for the Organisation and Administration of the Red Army was the first real attempt, by the Bolsheviks, at the creation of a political organ for the Red Army. The work undertaken for this dissertation would appear to show that, in many

respects, this is too much of a grandiose claim for an organ which, to all intents and purposes, was more concerned with recruiting men into the Red Army, than actually attempting to educate them or inculcate them in the ideals and spirit of the new army. Even in terms of its chief, L.M.Kaganovich, we have a man who would appear not to have particularly distinguished himself then, or later, as being a person who served in the Red Army's political apparatus with any particular distinction. Indeed, in some respects, as one of the few people actually involved in the Red Army's political apparatus during 1918-1920 and who survived Stalin, this, more than anything else, perhaps says something of the calibre of the man he really was—he simply carried out the work of the Party, regardless of what it was, with little real flair or interest.

During this early formative period of the history of the Soviet Republic, it was the case that prior to the creation of the Red Army itself in January 1918, there were two institutions already operating in various military units, which were to have a significant role to play in the future political apparatus of the Red Army—namely, the military commissars and the Party cells. Although their respective merits and demerits will be discussed later, it should be said here that, even in this pre-April 1918 period, it would appear that neither the

Party cells nor the military commissars were carrying out anything that can be remotely dubbed "political" or "cultural-educational" work in the military units. Although very little has actually been written on either of these two parts of the political apparatus of the Red Army, judging by what is available, it certainly would appear that the development of the Red Army's political apparatus had a long way to go and yet, despite these fairly humble beginnings, in less than a year from the formation of VBVK in April 1918, the Red Army's political apparatus was to be a huge organisation, disposing of large sums of money for the upkeep of both the Red Army's political apparatus at the centre and on the front.

I would agree with Soviet writers that the creation of the Red Army's political apparatus, despite the earlier creation of the Organisation-agitation department of the All-Russian Collegiate for the Organisation and Administration of the Red Army did not occur in January 1918, but really took place in April 1918, with the establishment of the All-Russian Bureau of Military Commissars, VBVK. Although the latter was not an avowedly Party-political organ-closer examination, for instance, of the political record of its chief, K.K.Yurenev would support that view-nevertheless, in embryonic form, one can see the future development of the Party's main political organ for the Red Army during the Civil War, the Political

Administration of the Revolutionary Military Soviet of the Republic, PUR. However, even if this is the case, it should not be taken to mean that, right from the very beginning, the Red Army's centralised political apparatus functioned smoothly and without much serious difficulty. As shown in the second chapter, VBVK, almost from birth, had a number of significant handicaps almost built into it, not least of which was that it was never viewed as a Party organ, designed to control the work of all the other Party organs, directly serving the needs of the men at the front. Its precise duties were never formally worked out until it was arguably too late. This is an especially important point, when one realises that VBVK was in a unique position, having no real experience to fall back on and everything that it had to carry out had never been tried before. Even at the earliest possible stage of its activity, it was faced with a Herculean task, designed, as it was, to take control of the work of all and every type of military commissar in the entire Republic-with a initial staff of 22!! Although its numbers were to significantly increase by October 1918, still VBVK was struggling to establish its authority where it counted most, at the front. Whilst this was a problem that would also confront PUR in the not too distant future, still it would appear to have affected VBVK more seriously. After all, VBVK was very much breaking new ground in a lot of

what it was actually trying to do; the lack of any real previous example to follow meant that it was severely hampered in the conduct of its work. There was no pool of resources to fall back on, no reserves of experienced personnel to rely on, everything had to be learnt from scratch and mistakes just had to be made, they could not be avoided.

It was also the case that for a comparatively long time-virtually half of the period that VBVK actually existed-VBVK had to compete with a number of other centralised military-political organs of the period, most notably the Political department of the Supreme Military Inspectorate, the Military-political section of Narkomvoen's Operations department and, later on, the Political department of the Revolutionary Military Soviet of the Republic. With so many organs operating from the centre, carrying out a wide assortment of political and military functions, it was obvious that confusion and overlapping of functions was bound to ensue and this certainly did not help VBVK increase its hold on the political work being carried out on the fronts.

The confusion over the precise nature of the functions of VBVK and its exact standing within the overall political and military establishment ensured that, even before the fateful 8th Party Congress, VBVK was facing stern criticism from the Army and Front political

departments, complaining about VBVK's poor leadership of political work at the front. In some respects, though, the criticism was perhaps too harsh-after all, the organ was hardly to blame for the lack of attention devoted to it by the Party's CC which, by the stroke of a pen and the publication of an exact, authoritative decree on the precise nature of the duties and functions of VBVK could have compelled the Army and Front political departments to have been more responsive to VBVK. VBVK was also hardly to blame for the confusion that naturally arose when, after the re-organisational shuffle of the centralised military-political apparatus in October/November 1918, it suddenly became this huge organisation-with a staff of just under 300-and almost overnight and without much apparent conviction on the part of the Party's main political organ, the Party's Central Committee, designed to serve the political needs of the Red Army units, both located at the front and in the rear. Judging by the virtually unabated flow of criticism from the front and its eventual demise, this organisational reshuffle cannot be said to have been a success. It was, in effect, too little too late. The centralised political apparatus in Moscow did not need so much an organisational reshuffle, as much as a total reorganisation. This was the view that the Party's CC would seem to have arrived at itself in early 1919 when, after having received a report on the

military defeats on the Eastern Front late in December 1918 in which the political apparatus itself came in for some stern criticism, the CC itself would have seemed to have prepared for the abolition of VBVK at the next Party Congress. One other point that should be noted here about this particular report was that its sole authors were Stalin and Dzerzhinsky and, surely it was not accidental that, having made the report to the CC, Stalin himself would appear to have become one of the fiercest opponents of VBVK itself, both immediately prior to the 8th Party Congress and during the 8th Party Congress itself, even to the extent that in past historical writing on the subject, he has been credited with pushing forward the original resolution, dissolving VBVK in its entirety.

Thus, contrary to Soviet assertions, the early period of the Red Army's political apparatus was full of mistakes made and new lessons that had to be learned. VBVK did make a lot of mistakes and, in some respects, found it almost impossible to run smoothly: the Red Army's political apparatus was virtually brand new-nothing had existed quite like it before and, perhaps, the Party should have allowed more time and thought to the creation and functioning of an organ like VBVK. However, given the emergency nature of the situation, the organs which did not produce immediate results had to go the wall, hence the decision to abolish VBVK in April 1919 and the

creation of PUR in May 1919.

On the whole, again contrary to much of what has been written in the USSR on this, there would appear to have been no natural progression in the running and organisation of the Red Army's political apparatus at this time-work had virtually to be carried out on an ad hoc basis; after all, with no previous experience, what else could be done? There was no plan emanating from the centre for the conduct of political work in the Red Army-as shown in the sections on the military commissars, the Party cells and the political departments, the Red Army's central political apparatus was virtually forced into a situation where it had to work on an individual basis, i.e. drawing up agreements which would fit one particular situation at a time, but not conforming to any "grand scheme" of things, as it were. Despite the Marxist-Leninist rhetoric on this point, there is very little real hard evidence to show that the work of the Red Army's political apparatus was operating according to some previously worked out theoretical or practical programme, especially in 1918. There was little concrete that, initially at least, the Red Army's central political apparatus was able to offer to the political apparatus on the front, it could offer guidance, advice, assistance but what it could not offer, through a lack of Party authority, as well as a lack of the necessary

organisational framework, was the necessary control of the political apparatus at the front. It could not issue orders as was en required- it simply did not have the necessary Party authority over the front political apparatus to sure that all its various decrees and statements on political work being carried out on the front were pu into effect. Given the importance that has been attached to the Red Army's political apparatus during the Civil War it would appear to be a stark contrast that one of the main reasons for its lack of success in the initial period of its existence was due to it not enjoying sufficient Party authority at the front!

Despite the initial failure of the central political apparatus of the Red Army to control the work being carried out on the front, political and cultural-educational work was carried out on the front throughout 1918. The work of the military commissars, the Party cells and arguably, the most important part of the Red Army's political apparatus, the political departments, ensured that, in various ways and to a varying extent, attempts were made to raise the overall consciousness of the Red Army recruit. These attempts were motivated initially by the need to maintain good military order in the units-after all, it was thought that the more conscious the soldiers were, the easier they would be to train and the more adept they would be on the battlefield.

In many respects, the changing perception of political work in the Red Army was emphasised by the changing role of the military commissar themselves. Initially, they were used in a variety of guises, mainly though in defending the gains of the October Revolution. In such a way, they had also been used after the 1917 February Revolution, although it would be wrong to say that the military commissars who served in the old Imperial Army units before October 1917 and those who served in the military units post-October 1917, were of the same ilk, so to speak. Safeguarding Soviet power was not the same thing as safeguarding the power of the Provisional Government. That aside, however, the position of the military commissars gradually changed throughout 1918 until, effectively before the end of the year, the military commissars were viewed as being Bolshevik Party functionaries, helping to ensure Bolshevik control of the Red Army. Back in April 1918, as detailed in the second chapter, there were a large minority of commissars serving in Red Army units who were not Bolshevik Party members-as long as these men were faithful to defending the interests of Soviet power, certainly VBVK saw no harm in employing these men in the Red Army. However, with the increasing politicisation of the Red Army-brought about largely by the increasing power of the Bolshevik-inspired political departments-the military commissars did find themselves

gradually becoming the weapons of the Bolshevik Party in the conduct of political and political-educational work in the Red Army. Given the political nature of the regime and, no less important, the political nature of the Red Army itself, in many respects, there was no other road for development of the powers of the military commissars, other than them being transferred into becoming functionaries of the Bolshevik Party itself. The Bolshevik Party could no longer afford the "luxury" of, for instance, having large numbers of Left SR military commissars serving in the Red Army units, fearing that the political control of the Red Army might be wrested away from them, either during the Civil War, or later.

Thus, in general, the role of the military commissars in the Red Army would appear to have been an important one. In the initial period of the creation of the Red Army, the commissars ensured that the Red Army remained loyal to the regime-they were, as detailed in the relevant chapter, the "eyes and ears" of the regime in the Red Army but, as the military and political situation changed, then so too did the functions and responsibilities of the military commissars in the Red Army itself. They were instructed to play a more prominent role in the political and cultural-educational work in the Red Army units, as well as maintaining good military discipline and order in the units. However, despite the full title of VBVK, the

latter was not really able to establish any proper organisational ties with the front military commissars. For instance, whilst it is true that VBVK did hold a conference of military commissars in June 1918, it is, as yet, almost impossible to gauge the full impact of the latter congress on the work of the front military commissars in 1918. Such an assessment can only be carried out through a careful reading of the relevant archival holdings, which it is not presently possible to undertake.

In assessing the role of the Party cells in the Red Army throughout 1918-1919, then the situation is even more complicated. Given their very nature, it would appear from the present lack of evidence that the Party cells were even less keen than the military commissars in leaving behind any records of their activity and work. This may be an area that some future Soviet historian(s) may choose to tackle in the future but, presently, all that exists on the activity of the Party cells in the Red Army during this time would appear to confirm that their activity was largely carried out in a unsupervised fashion and that the centre had very little direct say in what they were carrying out. Similar to the position of the Red Army's front political apparatus, as a whole, the Party cells embodied a distrust of VBVK, the none too strictly Party organ put in charge of an avowedly Party-

political apparatus.

There was no commonly-agreed statute on the powers and duties of the Party cells worked out until quite late on in the history of the Red Army's political apparatus and this lack of central direction only helped to add to an already confused situation. The Party conferences showed a great deal of interest in the activities of the Party cells but were not too keen in actually defining what they had to do, what their functions and responsibilities were in detailing their structure. Thus, the overall impact of the Party cells in the conduct of political and cultural-educational work varied from unit to unit, depending on a whole series of factors like who was in charge, the proximity of the unit to the front, the relationship with the military commissar and/or/ the political department, etc.

Similar to the position of the military commissars, the role of the Party cells also changed throughout the year. They were the oldest part of the emerging political apparatus of the Red Army, being initially created to spread Bolshevik influence in the old Imperial Army--another topic which has been largely ignored by Soviet historians. When the Red Army was duly created in 1918, they were almost alone in representing the interests of the Party at the front. However, with the growing presence and power of both the military commissars and the

political departments, the Party cells began slowly to lose their influence until, by March 1919, they were very much a former shadow of what they had been. They had begun to be viewed as almost superfluous to the needs of the political apparatus-a number of them having been adjudged as too interfering in the activities of both the commissars and the command staff and, given the overriding importance of the attainment of military victory, the Bolsheviks were not slow in reducing the power of that part of the political apparatus which it perceived as being injurious to the Bolshevik war effort. After all, one of the prime reasons for the creation and continued operation of the Bolshevik's Red Army political apparatus was that it aided the military effort of the Bolsheviks, not hindered it. Hence, the growing importance attached to the work of the main part of the political apparatus of the Red Army at this time, the political departments which, effectively, came to be the Red Army's front political apparatus.

As shown in the relevant section, the political departments were created through a mixture of local initiative and centralised help, though not, it must be said, thanks to the work of VBVK. The political departments, similar to the other parts of the front political apparatus, also saw their functions change throughout 1918, until by December 1918, they were

recognised as the Party organ in the Red Army's political apparatus, the organ on the front and in the army which was effectively to control the activity and work of all the other political organs of the Red Army. Although their structure and functions varied from front to front, overall, the political departments ensured a much greater concentration of effort and resources and helped in promoting the necessary level of political and cultural-educational activity. Due to the variety of personalities involved in the front and army political departments-examination of their composition reads almost like a "Who's who" of prominent Bolshevik personalities both of the Civil War period and beyond!-in many ways, the political departments themselves are proof of how seriously the Bolsheviks themselves looked on the Red Army's political apparatus. Many of the Chiefs of the Army and Front political departments were prominent Party members, who had served in the Party usually long before the 1917 October Revolution, tried and trusty comrades, who had undergone years of imprisonment in the tsarist camps. Thus, it was not too surprising that the activity and importance of the Red Army's political departments was so great in the future development of the Red Army's political apparatus. It can be argued that, especially on the evidence collated for this work, that the single most important reason for the eventual downfall of VBVK was its

failure to establish a proper, organisational link with the front political departments. Most of the recognised public critics of VBVK at the 8th Party Congress were chiefs, or former chiefs, of the Front and Army political departments.

Of course, the development of the political departments did not go as smoothly as perhaps a number of Soviet historians would like to show-the experience of the Northern Front's political department would prove this-but, on the whole, the political departments did play an important role in the development of the Red Army's political apparatus and in the conduct of the political and cultural-educational work in the Red Army units. They helped enrol new Party members, controlled the work being carried out, dished out funds for the work being undertaken, etc. They were very much at the centre of the political work being carried out in the Red Army and, if they did not function properly, then the political work was not carried out properly. It was as simple as that.

Thus, when it came to the 8th Party Congress, VBVK was in a very bad position, as regards having allies at the Congress, ready to defend it. Although not all the minutes of the 8th Party Congress have been published, judging by what is presently available, it would appear that very, very few delegates bothered to say anything positive about the role of VBVK, as the Party's leading

political organ. It would appear that the vast majority of delegates were more than happy with the prospects of building the apparatus anew, beginning with reconstructing the apparatus at the centre. Thus, VBVK was simply abolished and its chairman sent to the front. The new organ that was created-PUR-did incorporate a number of changes right away, in an attempt not to repeat previous mistakes and tighten up the apparatus both at the centre and at the front.

These changes were very important and included the following:-

- a)in its relationship with the CC, PUR was recognised as being directly subordinate to the latter, indeed at the time, it was stated that PUR was to be treated like the CC's military department;
- b)in the person of its chairman, Smilga, PUR had a man of undoubted energy, will and experience, a man who was serving both on the CC and RVSR-the two single most important organs of the Civil War. It was also blessed with a number of top Bolshevik Party figures as its deputy-chiefs;
- c)as detailed in the appendix at the end of this work, PUR had a huge staff, incorporating the former staff of VBVK, thereby ensuring that the new organ had some experience to rely on;
- d)judging by the relevant budget figures, PUR had a

massive budget at its disposal.

Thus, in terms of all these apparent advantages, one would have assumed that, in every respect, both in terms of its leading personnel, its direct relationship with the CC and RVSR, its increased staff numbers, etc., that all the old problems, which had beset VBVK in the immediate past would be ironed out and that the Red Army's political apparatus went from strength to strength from May 1919 onwards until the end of the Civil War itself. However, as detailed in the various sub-sections of the third chapter of this work, this was not entirely the case: a fact that previous accounts of the Red Army's Civil War political apparatus have been careful to avoid. Despite the personnel changes, the money, the increase in staff, PUR still found it very difficult to establish that working relationship with the Red Army's front political apparatus, which had so earlier eluded VBVK in 1918. A detailed examination of the First Congress of Red Army Political Workers, held in December 1919, shows quite conclusively that, despite the campaigns, the increase in the number of Party members on the front, the massive increase in the number of Red Army schools, the mobile theatres and cinemas, etc, etc, PUR's top leadership still could not say that it had a definite organisational relationship with the Red Army's front political apparatus and that everything that it decreed in Moscow was

instantly carried out on the front, by the Red Army's political apparatus there. Despite its obvious Party authority, PUR was heavily criticised at the Congress for being either too remote or for being too centralising. In some ways, it could not win. As far as Moscow was concerned, the Red Army's front political apparatus had to be more centralised in order to cut down on wastage and concentrate the resources of men and material better, and yet a number of the front and army political departments resisted this, as it reduced their autonomy and power. This overall picture once again underlines the fact that during the Civil War period, the Soviet state, even the Red Army itself, was not as centralised as has been previously suggested. There were still a number of important areas where the writ of the Party was not as strictly adhered to as Soviet historians, and others, have attempted to prove in the past.

If one looks at the relationship between the central political apparatus of the Red Army and the front political apparatus, then one finds that there was a lot of self-determination, on the part of the local Red Army political apparatus and, indeed, resistance to attempts by the centre to impose greater uniformity in the way the work was to be carried out. Even when the debate arose about the changing functions of the military commissars, despite the support of the top political leadership of PUR

and, to a lesser extent, Trotsky himself, the changes envisaged by Smilga et al. never took place during the Civil War and, indeed, these very thoughts and intentions were to be used by a later generation of Soviet historians to prove the destructiveness of PUR's leadership during the Civil War. In other words, throughout the length of the Civil War the front political apparatus was always in a strong position to resist what it did not want to implement.

In general, PUR did tend to suffer from a number of the same problems that had beset VBVK in 1918-1919. Thus, other than the problem of establishing a proper working relationship with the front political apparatus, PUR also underwent a lot of organisational changes which, judging by the available evidence, would not appear to have significantly increased its overall effectiveness. It was also the case that, although technically speaking, Smilga was in charge of PUR, due to the demands of the military situation, he was very rarely in Moscow to actually carry out much work on PUR's behalf, the day-to-day running of the organ being left to one of his relatively numerous deputy-chiefs. This must have created the danger of a lack of internal organisational cohesion within PUR itself, especially in terms of the overall strategic direction of the organ. After all, did Smilga, even when he was on the front, have some sort of over-riding voice

on what was being carried out in PUR's name in Moscow? Obviously, the whole question of leadership of the organ does require more material than presently available, in order to arrive at a much more concrete assessment of what its effect was on the day-to-day running of an organ like PUR, but once more, the work undertaken for this dissertation would appear to throw a shadow of doubt on the importance to the organ of someone like Smilga who was very rarely in Moscow to work in the his capacity as PUR's chief.

PUR could, and did, publish reams of statistics on the amount of literature sent to the front, the number of literacy schools operating in the Red Army units, the campaign to encourage the men to read and write, etc., but in arriving at a general evaluation of the effect of the entire work of the political apparatus on the actual Red Army soldier himself, then the conclusions reached by Soviet historians would appear to lack the necessary justification. This is not to say that if, in the future, all the relevant archival materials were published that it might not be proven that the Red Army's political apparatus had been a war-winning factor, similar to the impact of the number of sabres, guns, cannon, etc, but it has to be said that, at present, there is simply not enough information to prove conclusively that the Red Army's political apparatus was a major factor to the

contribution of Bolshevik victory during the Civil War. However, I think that it is possible to show how, for instance, by examining the role of the commissars, the Red Army's political apparatus did ensure that the Red Army units remained, on the whole, both loyal to the Bolshevik Party, as well as reasonably disciplined, in the military sense, plus that the political workers and the Communist Party element did provide the Party with the necessary "shock" troops when the situation demanded it. However, how does one go about evaluating the impact of all the campaigns of political and cultural-educational work on the Red Army soldier and prove that he became more aware, more conscious and thus a better soldier, without access to all the relevant archival holdings, where such information is stored? Why have so few, again judging by the work undertaken for this dissertation, military commissars of the Civil War period written about their experiences? What was their general assessment of the work carried out? On the basis of only three memoirs, I am very wary about making gross generalisations.

One can also conclude that the Party did attach great importance to the work of the Red Army's political apparatus, in terms of the top personnel involved, as well as budget allocations, but even there, one would have to be wary of making too many sweeping remarks. For instance, why did the Party take so long to do something

about VBVK which, clearly, for quite some time before the 8th Party Congress, was not in a position to adequately handle the tasks thrust upon it? With the creation of PUR, the Party's CC would appear to have learnt from the mistakes of VBVK and yet PUR still found itself in a very difficult position in trying to establish the necessary control relationship with the front political apparatus. This was a key area-what was the point in decreeing in Moscow, if you could not be certain that the necessary decrees would be put into effect on the Eastern Front? As for the front political apparatus, this dissertation would appear to show that it enjoyed a not inconsiderable degree of autonomy and local power and, at various times, was very reluctant to cede any of this to the centralised political apparatus, in Moscow. Smilga himself was very aware of this and complained about this on several occasions.

As stated earlier, this dissertation set itself two main tasks:

- 1) to describe the organisation and work of the Red Army's political apparatus, including all the previous "grey" areas in the history of the Red Army's Civil War political apparatus;
- 2) to assess the available evidence and evaluate the stated importance of the political apparatus in helping to achieve Bolshevik victory.

Obviously, there have been a lot of problems involved in this work, not least of which has been the proper evaluation of evidence which has, on occasion, displayed a lot of contradictory assertions, but, overall, the balance of present existing material clearly shows that, politics aside, there is not enough concrete material conclusively proving that the Red Army's Civil War political apparatus was a major factor in the victory of the Bolsheviks in the Civil War. Certainly, Soviet historians have got a lot of work to do in order to prove that the Red Army's political apparatus was an important factor in securing Bolshevik victory and they can do this by publishing everything possible, relevant to this topic, warts and all. Soviet historians have been far too selective in producing bits and pieces on the work of the latter, ignoring the parts that they have never felt comfortable to discuss-the work of VBVK, the leadership of PUR, the antagonism of the front political apparatus to the centralised political-military establishment, etc-and they must begin to analyse openly and honestly the real impact of the Red Army's Civil War political apparatus on the Bolshevik war effort. Until that is done, Western historians will be in their right to continue to be sceptical about Soviet perceptions of the role of the Red Army's Civil War political apparatus.

APPENDIX ONE

Organisational structure of PUR (May 1919)

Name of department and position	No.of people	Monthly pay	Notes
Chief of Admn.	1	3,000	
Assistant	1	2,800	
Senior secretary	1	1,750	
Errand boy	1	1,750	
A.GENERAL DEPARTMENT			
Chief of department	1	2,800	
Errand boys	4	1,750	
General treasury.			
Head of treasury (1st deputy-chief of department).	1	2,600	
1. General section			
Section head	1	2,020	
a) judicial reference bureau.			
Senior clerk	1	1,750	
assistant clerk	1	-----	

Name of department and position	No.of people	Monthly pay	Notes
b) registration.			
Chief (equivalent to a senior clerk)	1	1,750	
registration reporters	4	-----	
dispatcher	1	-----	
c) General clerical section.			
Senior clerk	1	1,750	
Junior clerk	1	1,360	
Clerical assistants	2	-----	
Typists	2	-----	
Lithographers	2	-----	
d) Ordering desk			
Junior clerk	1	1,360	
Clerical assistant	1	-----	
Typist	1	-----	
e) Personnel desk			
Junior clerk	1	1,360	
Clerical assistant	1	-----	
Typist	1	-----	
2. Main accounting department.			
Chief accountant (equivalent to a departmental head)	1	2,020	

Name of department and position	No.of people	Monthly pay	Notes
a) Accountancy.			
Book-keeper (equivalent to a senior clerk)	1	1,750	
Senior accountants	2	-----	
Junior accountants	3	-----	
b) Finance office			
Senior clerk	1	1,750	
Junior clerk	1	1,360	
Clerical assistant	1	-----	
Typists	2	-----	
Reporter	1	-----	
c) Cash desk			
Paymaster (equivalent to a senior clerk)	1	1,750	*
Assistant paymaster	1	1,360	
II. Commandant's office			
Commandant (2nd assistant to chief of the department)	1	2,600	
1. Treasury of the commandant's office, etc.			
Head of the treasury	1	2,020	
Junior clerk	1	1,360	
Accountant	1	-----	
Clerical assistants	4	-----	

Name of department and position	No.of people	Monthly pay	Notes
Typist	1	-----	
Reporter	1	-----	
2. House-keeping section.			
Chief (head of section)	1	2,020	
a) Workshop			
Head (equivalent to a senior clerk)	1	1,750	
Mechanic	1	-----	
Metalworkers	2	-----	
Electrician	1	-----	
Farrier	1	-----	
Carpenters	2	-----	
Tailors	2	-----	
Boot-menders	3	-----	
b) Warehouse			
Head (equivalent to a junior clerk)	1	-----	
Porters	3	-----	
Workers	5	-----	
c) Dining-room			
Head (equivalent to a senior clerk)	1	1,750	
Assistant	1	-----	
Cashiers	2	-----	

Name of department and position	No.of people	Monthly pay	Notes
Cooks	4	-----	
Waitresses	8	-----	
Workers	2	-----	
Washer-ups	2	-----	
d) Cleansing.			
Head (equivalent to a junior clerk)	1	1,360	
Cleaners	15	-----	
Stable hands	5	-----	
Worker	1	-----	
3. Communications section.			
Head of Communications	1	2,020	
a) Team of cyclists and couriers.			
Head of the team (equivalent to a junior clerk)	1	1,360	
Cyclists	8	-----	
Couriers	12	-----	
b) Garage			
Head (equivalent to a junior clerk)	1	1,750	
Storeman	1	-----	
Metalworkers	2	-----	
Roster	1	-----	

Name of department and position	No.of people	Monthly pay	Notes
Motor-cyclists	6	-----	
Chauffeurs	10	-----	
c) Telephone station.			
Head (equivalent to a senior clerk)	1	1,750	
Supervisors (electricians)	2	-----	
Telephone operators	6	-----	
4. Medical-sanitation section.			
Head (doctor)	1	2,400	
a) Out-patient's clinic and chemist			
Doctor	1	-----	
Chemist's assistant	1	-----	
Nurse	1	-----	
b) Infirmary.			
Chemist's assistant	1	-----	
Nurse	1	-----	
Supervisor	1	-----	
Typist	1	-----	
Sanitation workers	2	-----	
Cleaner	1	-----	

Name of department and position	No.of people	Monthly pay	Notes
III. Store and warehouses.			
Head	1	2,400	
Travelling inspectors	15	1,750	
1. Office.			
Head of the office	1	2,020	
Accountant (equivalent to a senior clerk)	1	1,750	
Ledger clerk	1	-----	
Office workers	2	-----	
Cashier	1	-----	
Junior clerk	1	1,360	**
Typists	2		
Reporters	2		***
Cleaners and workers	3		
2. Dispatch office.			

Head (equivalent to a senior clerk)	1	2,020	
	1	1,750	*****
Assistants	2	1,360	
Packers	240	-----	
3. Warehouse for literature.			
Head (equivalent to a senior clerk)	1	1,750	

Name of department and position	No.of people	Monthly pay	Notes
assistants	2	1,750	
Librarian	1	-----	
Assistant librarians	2	-----	
4. Theatre-music-cinema warehouse.			
Head (equivalent to a senior clerk)	1	1,750	
assistants	3	-----	
5. Warehouse for study books and sports equip.			
Head (equivalent to a senior clerk)	1	1,750	
assistants	2		
B. POLITICAL DEPARTMENT			
Chief of the department	1	2,800	
Travelling inspectors	10	2,400	
I. Statistics section.			
Head of the section	1	2,400	
Senior clerk	1	1,750	
Statisticians	4	-----	
Counters	2	-----	
Draftsman	1	-----	
Typist	1	-----	

Name of department and position	No.of people	Monthly pay	Notes
II. Information section.			
Head of the section	1	2,400	
1. Daily information.			
Senior clerk	1	1,750	
Information gatherers	3	-----	
Typists	2	-----	
III. Agitation-propaganda section.			
Head of the section	1	2,400	
1. Agitational clerical.			
Senior clerk	1	1,750	
Typist	1	-----	
Clerical assistant	1	-----	
2. Agitational courses (special staff statutes).			
IV. Administrative section.			
Head of the section	1	2,400	
1. General clerical.			
Senior clerk	1	1,750	
Junior clerks	2	1,360	
Draftsman	1	-----	
Typists	2	-----	
Registration officers	2	-----	
Clerical assistants	2	-----	

Name of department and position	No.of people	Monthly pay	Notes
Reporters	2	-----	
Lithographers	2	-----	
2. Registration-distribution.			
Senior clerk	1	1,750	
Clerical assistants	2	-----	
Typist	1	-----	
3. Accounts.			
Accountant	1	1,750	
Ledger clerk	1		
C. EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.			
Head of the department	1	2,800	
Assistant	1	2,600	
Errand boy	1	1,750	
1.General section.			
Head of the section	1	2,400	
Draftsman	1	-----	
1. General clerical.			*****
Senior clerk	1	1,750	
Clerical assistant	1	-----	
Typists	2	-----	
Lithographers	2	-----	
Reporters	2	-----	

Name of department and position	No.of people	Monthly pay	Notes
2. Accounts.			
Accountant (equivalent to a senior clerk)	1	1,750	
Ledger clerk	1	-----	
1. Bibliographic bureau.			
Bibliographers (equivalent to senior clerks)	4	1,750	
2. Library clerical.			
Senior clerk	1	1,750	
Junior clerks	3	1,360	
Office worker	1	-----	
Typist	1	-----	
3. Museum			
Museum keeper (equivalent to a senior clerk)	1	1,750	
Office worker	1	-----	
III. Training section.			
Head of the section	1	2,400	
Travelling lecturer- specialists	7	2,020	
1. School-instructional clerical.			
Senior clerk	1	1,750	
Junior clerk	1	1,360	
Typist	1	-----	

Name of department and position	No.of people	Monthly pay	Notes
School-course instructors and errand boys	7	1,750	
2. Bureau of physical culture.			
Head (equivalent to a senior clerk)	1	1,750	
Travelling instructors	7	1,750	
IV. Artistic section.			
Head of the section	1	2,400	
1. General clerical.			
Senior clerk	1	1,750	
Junior clerk	1	1,360	
Ledger clerk	1	-----	
Clerical assistant	1	-----	
Typist	1	-----	
2. Theatre-music bureau.			
Head of theatrical post	1	2,020	
Head of music post	1	2,020	
Senior clerk	1	1,750	
Travelling theatrical instructors	7	1,750	
Travelling musical instructors	7	1,750	

Name of department and position	No.of people	Monthly pay	Notes
3. Club bureau.			
Head (equivalent to a senior clerk)	1	1,750	
Instructors	15	1,750	
4. Cinematographic bureau.			
Head	1	2,020	
Travelling instructors, mechanics and specialists	3	1,750	
D. LITERARY-PUBLICATIONS' DEPARTMENT.			
Head of the department	1	2,800	
I. General section.			
Head of the section	1	2,400	
Errand boy	1	1,750	
Senior clerk	1	1,750	
Accountant	1	1,750	
Senior ledger clerk	1	-----	
Junior ledger clerk	1	-----	
Clerical assistant	1	-----	
Typist	1	-----	
Reporters	2	-----	
II. Press bureau.			
Head	1	2,400	
Senior clerk	1	1,750	

Name of department and position	No.of people	Monthly pay	Notes
Typists	3	-----	
Registration officer	1	-----	
III. Editorial board.			
Main editor-member of the collegiate	1	2,400	
Journal editor(member of the collegiate)	1	2,020	
Poster editor (member of the collegiate)	1	2,020	
Fiction editor (member of the collegiate)	1	2,020	
Secretary (member of the collegiate)	1	2,020	
Editorial assistant	1	-----	
Special editor for military literature	1	2,020	
Assistants to the latter	5	1,750	
Specialist, secretary for military-technical publicns.	1	2,020	
Senior clerk	1	1,750	
Proof readers	3	-----	
Artist-illustrator	1	-----	
Typists	2	-----	
IV. Publication and typographic inspection.			
Head for the tech. side of publication	1	2,400	

Name of department and position	No.of people	Monthly pay	Notes
Assistant	1	1,750	
Errand boys	5	1,750	

NOTES:-

1) People, whose rates of pay have not been listed in the table, will receive the corresponding rates of pay agreed with the relevant Trade Unions.

2) The Political Administration also has the following under its direct control:

Cars.....3
 Medical orderlies.....1
 Trucks.....3
 Motor bikes.....6
 Bicycles.....8
 Cart horses.....10
 Steeds.....2
 Steam carriages.....5
 Buggies.....1

*-in charge of stores, warehouse and fuel;

**-head of the team of packers;

***-one to be in charge of periodical publications; the other to be in charge of books and brochures;

****-in charge of theatrical, literary text books, musical literature, posters and material for the cinemas;

*****-in charge of text books, sports equipment, materials for artistic work;

*****-in charge of political literature, fiction, scientific works and military bibliography.

SOURCE: "Sbornik sekretnykh prikazov R.V.S.R. 1919 goda." M. 1919.

APPENDIX TWO:-

Biographies of a number of the leading figures involved in the Red Army's Civil War political apparatus.

BELOBORODOV, ALEKSANDR GEORGIVICH(1891-1938)

Beloborodov was born in October 1891 in Solikamsk uezd, Perm guberniya. His father was a worker and, in 1905, having completed an elementary education, A.S. Beloborodov joined the same factory as his dad. However, he quickly became alert to the activities of the local Social-Democratic organisation and a few years after beginning work, he joined the latter. Not long after beginning his illegal activity for the Party, Beloborodov was arrested in 1908 and sentenced to 4 years imprisonment. Like many other leading Bolsheviks who found themselves confined, Beloborodov took advantage of his incarceration by reading prolifically and completing his own process of self-education. Once he was released, Beloborodov began to organise a worker's cultural-educational society, at that time, virtually the only legal activity open to the Bolsheviks. However, this did not prevent his re-arrest at the outbreak of the First World War. Under escort, he was sent to work in a factory in Tyumen, but was eventually returned to work in Perm guberniya.

At the outbreak of the February Revolution in 1917, he was a member of the Lysvensky Soviet and the latter's local Party committee. In April 1917, he was a member of the Urals oblast RSDRP committee, as well as being a delegate to the April 1917 Party conference and to the 6th Party Congress. After the break-up of the Constituent Assembly, he was elected a member of the Urals oblast Executive Committee, working initially as the latter's Deputy-Chairman and eventually becoming the latter's Chairman. After the retreat of the Red Army from the Urals, he then worked in Perm and Vyatka. At the 8th Party Congress, he was elected a member of the Party's CC. In April 1919, the Council of Defence sent him to the Southern Front. On returning from the front, he was appointed Deputy-Chief of PUR in July 1919. In October 1919, he was then appointed a member of the RMS of the 9th Army (South-Western Front). When the latter captured Kuban, he then became a member of the Kuban Revolutionary Committee. In August 1920, he was appointed Deputy-

Chairman of the Revolutionary Soviet of the Caucasus Labour Army, then Chairman of the krai's economic council for the the South-West.

In October 1921, he was transferred back to Moscow, where he became Deputy People's Commissar of Internal Affairs; in July 1923, he became People's Commissar of Internal Affairs.

During the ideological struggles of the 1920s, Beloborodov was a supporter of Trotsky, although he did eventually recant his previously 'mistaken' views and, in 1930, found himself working in the State Purchases' Committee. At this time, he was also a member of the Central Executive Committee. Needless to say, given his earlier allegiance with Trotsky in the 1920s, Beloborodov was purged in 1938, but has been subsequently fully rehabilitated.

FURMANOV, DMITRY ANDREYEVICH(1891-1926)

Principally, a writer, Furmanov studied at Moscow University between 1921-1914. In 1918, he joined the Bolshevik Party and, in September of that same year, became secretary to the Ivanovo-Voznesensk guberniya Party committee. In February 1919, he was sent to carry out political work on the Eastern Front, specifically amongst the Urals and Aleksandr-Gay group of troops. From April-August 1919, he was military commissar to the 25th Rifle Division. In August 1919, he became Deputy Chief and, a few months later(October 1919), Chief of the political department of the Turkestan Front. In March 1920, he was sent to work on the RMS of the Semirech Front, where he took part in the crushing of the mutiny, which had broken out around the town of Verny. In July-August 1920, he became military commissar to the 3rd Turkestan Rifle Division and, in August 1920, he became Chief of the political department of 9th Army. He also became military commissar to one of the Red Army's first parachute brigades during this year. For his military and political services in the Civil War, he was awarded the Order of the Red Banner in 1922. From 1921 until his death, Furmanov was involved in editorial work and the writing of a number of books and stories on the Civil War, most notable of which were the following: "Red Descent", (1922); "Chapayev", (1923); "In 1918", (1923) and, finally, "Mutiny", (1925).

GONCHAROV, NIKOLAI KUZMICH(1886-1970)

Joined the RSDRP in 1904. In 1917, he was appointed a commissar of the Moscow Revolutionary Committee, in charge

of the Simonov raion in Moscow. In April 1918, he was appointed a member of the praesidium of the executive committee of the Moscow Soviet. In September of that year, he was then posted to take charge of the political department of the 6th Army. In December 1918, he became Chief of the political department of the Northern Front; in January 1919, he also became a member of the front's RMS. From April-October 1919, he became military commissar to the 26th Rifle Division. From February-March 1920, he became a member of the RMS of 5th Army. In March-July 1920, he then became a member of the Military Soviet of the the People's Revolutionary Army of the Far Eastern Republic and, at the same time of the latter appointment, Goncharov also became a member of the Party's Far Eastern Bureau and Siberian Bureau. He was placed in charge of the Political administration of the Siberian troops. He was a delegate to the 10th Party Congress. Afterwards, he was involved in a number of Party and economic posts. He was also a member of the Party's Central Control Commission.

GOLOSHCHEKIN, FILIPP ISAEVICH(1876-1941)

Joined the RSDRP in 1903. His father was a contractor. Finished dentist school in 1903. In 1917, he was a delegate to the 7th(April) All-Russian Conference and the Party's 6th Congress. He was also a delegate to the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets; at this time, he was a member of the Petrograd Revolutionary Committee and a member of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee. In December 1917, he was made a member of the Ekaterinburg Party Committee, in charge of the latter's military department. In February 1918, he became Urals oblast military commissar, a member of the Party's obkom and a member of the oblast soviet. In May 1918, he was appointed okrug military commissar of the entire region, becoming one of the new republic's first ever okrug military commissars. From September 1918-January 1919, he was political commissar to 3rd Army, (being in charge not only of political work amongst the military units, but also in charge of political work amongst the local civilian population). From December 1918, he was appointed to the Party's Siberian Bureau and became okrug military commissar for the Urals Military District. He was a delegate at both the 7th and 8th Party Congresses, at the 8th Party Congress, in actual fact, he was a member of the 'military opposition'. Between April-June 1919, he was a member of the RMS of the Turkestan Army on the Eastern Front. In August 1919, he became chairman of the Chelyabinsk guberniya revolutionary committee. In October

1919-May 1920, he was appointed a member of the All-Russian Central Executive's Committee Turkestan Commission. at this time, he was also appointed to work on the RSFSR's Council of Economy. From 1921 onwards, he held various economic, Soviet and Party posts. He was a candidate member to the CC in 1924 and was a full-fledged member of the CC between 1927-1934. At various times, he was also a member of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee and the Central Executive Committee.

GUSEV, SERGEI IVANOVICH(1874-1933)

(Real name, Yakov Davidovich Drabkin). Joined the RSDRP in 1896. His father was a teacher. During the October Revolution, he headed the secretariat of the Petrograd Revolutionary Committee. He was a delegate to the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets, elected a member of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee. In February-March 1918, he was secretary to the Petrograd Defence Committee; not long after that appointment, he was then placed in charge of administrative affairs of the Council of Economy for the Northern oblast. In September-December 1918, he was appointed a member of the RMS of 2nd Army; from December 1918-June 1919, he then became a member of the RMS of the Eastern Front. From June-December 1919, he was then placed in charge of the Moscow defence sector and became a military commissar to the Field Staff of the Revolutionary Military Soviet of the Republic. From December 1919-December 1920, there followed a series of appointments to the RMS of the South-Eastern, South-Western, Caucasus, etc., Fronts.

From January 1921-January 1922, Gusev was put in charge of PUR, as well as being Chairman of the CC's Turkestan Bureau. From February 1922-April 1924, he was a member of the RMS of the Turkestan Front; from May 1921-August 1923, he was a member of the Revolutionary Military Soviet of the Republic. For his military and political services to the state, he was awarded 2 Orders of the Red Banner(1920, 1922). He was a delegate to the 9th and 10th Party Congresses. In 1920, he had candidate membership status to the Party's CC.

In 1923, he was appointed secretary to the Party's Central Control Commission and a member of the collegiate of 'Rabkrin' and, later, worked in the apparatus of the Comintern. He headed a Military-historical commission, evaluating the experience of the First World War and the Civil War and was a member of the board of the Revolutionary Military Soviet of the Republic's Military-editorial council. Member of the Central Executive Committee. Buried in the Kremlin Wall.

KASPAROVA, VERA D.(BORN-? DIED-?)

There is virtually no biographical information available presently on this woman, despite the fact that, judging by the information collated for this dissertation, she did play a prominent role both in the organisation and activity of VBVK and PUR. Other than what has mentioned in the body of this dissertation, all that can be said is the following:

"Vera Kasparova was an old Bolshevik who was in charge of work among women of the east for the Party and for the Comintern's International Women's Secretariat, beginning in 1921. The Secretariat was dissolved in 1926. Kasparova, a leading member of the Left Opposition, was expelled at the fifteenth congress in 1927."

Apparently, also, she was exiled to Siberia alongwith Radek and, just before she boarded the train to go into exile, is supposed to have said the following about Stalin:

"He is a megalomaniac...He will shed much blood, ours first of all...and will destroy the revolution." (Both extracts are taken from Saunders, George. "SAMIZDAT. Voices of the Soviet opposition." Monad Press, New York, 1974, p.105).

KATANYAN, RUBEN PAVLOVICH(1881-1966)

The son of a teacher, Katanyan studied at Moscow University and became involved in the revolutionary movement from 1901. On the eve of the 1905 revolution, he had already worked in a number of student organisations in Moscow and has suffered a term of imprisonment. During the 1905 revolution, however, he worked for the RSDLP on the Orenburg railroad, then undertook underground work for the Party in both Moscow and Tbilisi until 1908, when he became editor of the Bolshevik newspaper, "Borba", published in Tbilisi. Between 1909-1913, he worked as a propagandist and publicist for the Tbilisi Party organisation. Between March-September 1917, he was a member of the "Novaya zhizn" group of social-democratic internationalists, as well as being a member of the Central trade Union bureau of Moscow. He played an active part in the October Revolution in Moscow and, in 1919, was appointed to work in 11th Army on the front. There, he edited the local Army newspaper, "Krasniy Voin" and he was appointed to direct the work of PUR's Political department. In 1920-1921, he was put in charge of the CC's agitation-propaganda department. In 1923, Katanyan became a deputy of the RSFSR's State Prosecutor. In 1933-

1937, he then became senior assistant to the State Prosecutor of the Soviet Union(then, this position was filled by Vyshinsky) and played a prominent role in the conduct of some of the "show trials" conducted by Stalin in the late 1930s. Ironically, he himself was eventually arrested in 1938 and was imprisoned in one of the gulags by the secret police. In 1955, he was released from prison, formally rehabilitated and given a state pension. He died in June 1966.

KHODOROVSKY, JOSEF ISAEVICH(1885-1940)

Joined the RSDLP in 1903. In 1917, worked as a propagandist for the Moscow Committee of the RSDLP, took part in the street battles in Moscow during the October Revolution. In 1918, he was a member of the collegiate of the People's Commissariat of Labour. From December 1918-March 1919, he was Chief of the Southern Front's political department; from January-July 1919, he was also a member of the RMS of the Southern Front. In March 1919, he was appointed a member of the RMS of 9th Army-a position he held until August 1919. In 1920, he was made Chairman of the Kazan and Tula guberniya executive committees. In 1921, he was then made of the CC's Siberian Bureau. From 1922 onwards, he held a number of diplomatic posts. At various times, a member of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee.

KUIBYSHEV, VALERIAN VLADIMIROVICH(1888-1935)

Joined the RSDLP in 1904. His father was an officer in the Tsarist Army. Between 1905-1906, he studied at the Military-medical academy in St.Petersburg. In 1917, he was appointed Chairman of the Samara committee of the RSDLP. He was a delegate at the 7th(April) conference of the RSDLP. He then became Chairman of the Samara Military Revolutionary Committee and the Party's guberniya committee. In 1918, he became Chairman of the Samara guberniya executive committee. In the debate on the Brest-Litovsk peace treaty, Kuibyshev supported the stance of the Left Communists, headed by Bukharin. in June 1918, he took part in the defence of Samara from the Czech troops. In July-September 1918, he was political commissar and member of the RMS of 1st Army; in September-October 1918, he held the same posts in 4th Army. From October 1918, he became Chairman of the Samara guberniya committee of the Party. From April 1919, he became a member of the RMS of the Southern Group of Armies on the

Eastern Front, also holding, at the same time, the position of Chairman of the Military Soviet of the Samara strengthened raion, ("ukrepleniye raion"). From July 1919, he was a member of the RMS of the Astrakhan group of forces; between August-October 1919, he was a member of the RMS of 11th Army. In October 1919, he was appointed Deputy-Chairman of the All-Russian Central Executive's Committee's Turkestan Commission; at that time, he was also appointed a member of the RMS of the Turkestan Front, a position he held until August 1920. In May 1920, he was appointed Chief of the political Administration of the Turkestan Front and, in September of that year, the RSFSR's representative attached to the Bukhara government. In April 1921, he was a member of the praesidium of the Supreme Economic Council and, in November, made Chief of "Glavelectro". He was a delegate to the 7th and 8th Party congresses. From 1923 onwards, he was involved in a variety of government and State posts. In 1921-1922, he obtained candidate-member status of the CC; in 1923, he became a member of the Central Control Commission and, between 1923-1926, Chairman of "Rabkrin". In 1927, he became a full member of the CC and the Politburo. At various times, he was also a member of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee and the CEC. Buried in the Kremlin Wall.

KUZMIN, NIKOLAI NIKOLAEVICH(1883-1939)

Joined the RSDLP in 1903. Completed his higher education at St. Petersburg University. From November 1917-March 1918, he served as a commissar on the South-Western Front, attached to the latter's staff HQ. From September 1918-April 1919 and from December 1919-April 1920, he served as a member of the RMS of 6th Army. He was decorated with the Order for the Red Banner in 1919 for bravery in the field. From April-November 1919, he was on the RMS of 3rd Army. From April-July 1920, he served as a member of the RMS of the Baltic Fleet; from July-November 1920, he served on the RMS of 12th Army, becoming assistant to the Army's military chief in August 1920. From December 1920-May 1921, he was Deputy-Chief of the Baltic Fleet's political department. He was a delegate to the 10th Party congress. For bravery in the field, whilst taking part in the crushing of the Kronstadt Mutiny in 1921, he was awarded a second Order of the Red Banner in 1922. After the Civil War, Kuzmin was used in a variety of Party and government posts.

MURALOV, NIKOLAI IVANOVICH(1877-1937)

Joined the RSDLP in 1905. One of the leaders of the October Revolution in Moscow. He was put in charge of the Moscow Military District, when the latter was created in May 1918. From August-September 1918, he served on the RMS of the Eastern Front; a month later, he was transferred to working on the RMS of 12th Army. His subsequent Civil War career is unknown.

During the 1920s, he would appear to have been one of the most outspoken adherents of the Trotskyite opposition. He signed the "Declaration of the 46". He was expelled from the Party at the 15th Party Congress and banished to Siberia. In April 1936, he was arrested, sentenced to death at the January 1937 "show trial" and shot. He has been subsequently rehabilitated.

OKULOVA, GLAFIRA IVANOVNA(1878-1957)

Joined the RSDLP in 1899. Her father was a gold merchant. She studied to be a school-teacher in Moscow. In 1917, she was elected to the praesidium of the executive committee of the Yenisei guberniya soviet. In 1918, she was appointed a member of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee and a member of the latter's praesidium, in charge of the instructional courses for the former's agitators and instructors. From December 1918-March 1919, she was Chief of the Eastern Front's political department. From April-June 1919, she was a member of the RMS of 1st Army. From June-November 1919, she was both a member of the RMS of 8th Army, as well as Chief of the latter's political department. From December 1919-March 1920, she became a member of the RMS of the Reserve Army of the Republic(Kazan) and Chief of the latter's political department. From 1920-1921, she was involved in political work in the transport sector, then held various teaching and Party posts.

POLONSKY, VYACHESLAV PAVLOVICH(1886-1932)

Joined the RSDLP in 1905, initially being recruited by the Mensheviks. His father was a watch repairer. Took part in the revolutionary movement and was arrested in 1905 and sentenced to two years imprisonment. Not long after the events of October 1917, he quickly left the Mensheviks to join the Bolsheviks. He had been a

journalist before the October Revolution, contributing a number of works to a variety of literary journals of the period. During the Civil War, he was placed in charge of PUR's Literary-publications' department.

After the Civil War, his literary career began again and wrote a number of works on Bakunin, Dostoevsky, etc. Between 1926-1931, he was editor of "Noviy Mir" and was dubbed by Lunacharsky as "a real master of journalism." Throughout the 1920s, he poured over a number of contemporary problems then facing Soviet literature and wrote in support of such writers, as Furmanov, Babel, Fadeyev, etc. Although his own literary work was not above criticism, Polonsky did much to help the nurturing Soviet literary world and he was well-known for his reasonably balanced outlook and views on the existing generation of Soviet writers.

RAKOVSKY, CHRISTIAN GEORGIEVICH(1873-1941)

Born in the Bulgarian town of Kostel. His father was a merchant. From 1889, he took part in the Social-Democratic movements of a number of countries, namely, Bulgaria, Romania, France and Russia. He eventually joined the Bolsheviks in 1918, becoming one of the founder members of the Comintern.

During the Civil War years, Rakovsky occupied a number of very important posts in the new Party and government administration, eg, as a member of the Party's CC and Orgbureau; member of the CC of the Communist Party of the Ukraine; member of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee; Chairman of the Ukrainian Sovnarkom, etc. More specifically, during 1919-1920, Rakovsky was Deputy-Chief of PUR, a member of the RMS of the South-Western Front. In 1923, he was appointed Deputy-Foreign Minister and, later, became Soviet Ambassador to both Britain and France.

During the 1920s, Rakovsky was a supporter of Trotsky in the power struggle against Stalin and, in 1927, he was expelled from the Party's CC and relieved of his duties as Deputy-Foreign Minister; at the 15th Party Congress, he was expelled from the Party altogether. Up until 1934, he lived in Astrakhan and Saratov. After the 17th Party Congress, he made a request to the Party's CC to restore him his Party membership and he was allowed to return to Moscow, where he worked in the area of Soviet health care. In 1935, his Party membership was restored to him. At the moment of his arrest in 1937, he was working as Chief of Administration of the RSFSR Ministry of Health. In 1938, he was again expelled from the Party and sentenced to 20 years imprisonment for his alleged role in the "anti-

Soviet Right-wing Trotskyite bloc". He died in prison in 1941. He has been posthumously fully rehabilitated.

SEREBRYAKOV, LEONID PETROVICH(1890-1937)

Born in 1890 in Samara, his father was a metal-worker. Due to the poor circumstances of his parents, the young Serebryakov had to live with a family in Ufa. Eventually, when his father had found permanent work in the town of Lugansk, they all moved there. However, even so, in 1904, Serebryakov still had to seek employment in Baku, where he began to read illegal Marxist literature and, in 1905, joined the Lugansk committee of the RSDLP.

His first period of arrest occurred not long after his membership of the RSDLP; in 1908, however, he was re-arrested and sentenced to 2 years imprisonment in Vologda guberniya. At the end of his sentence, he travelled all over Russia, on Party work, for the next couple of years, but this did not prevent him from being yet again arrested and sentenced to 3 years imprisonment in the notorious Narym region in 1912. He escaped, however, in 1913 and the RSDLP sent him to Baku to carry out work there. He helped organise a strike there and, for his trouble, was re-arrested and sent back to Narym province. However, he managed to escape for a second time and fled back to Moscow. The authorities re-arrested him again and, on this occasion, forced him to stay in Narym province until 1916. Once his term of imprisonment was legally over, he travelled to Petrograd, where he continued to work in the Party underground. Completely unexpectedly, he was mobilised and sent to Kostroma to serve in the 88th Infantry Regiment. This meant that, during the 1917 February Revolution, Serebryakov, alongwith S.S.Danilov, was in an ideal position to help set up the Kostroma Soviet of Workers and Peasant Deputies. He then returned to Moscow, as a member of the Party's oblast soviet.

During the 1917 October Revolution, he was a member of the praesidium of the Moscow soviet, as well as a secretary to the Party's oblast committee and a member of the praesidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee. From 1919-1920, he occupied a number of important positions, most notably, a secretary to the Party's CC, member of the Politburo, a delegate to the 8th and 9th Party Congresses, etc. At the end of 1920, he was elected Chairman of the Southern Bureau of the Soviet trade unions, as well as being a member of the RMS of the Southern Front. With units of 11th Army, Serebryakov played an important role in the establishment of Soviet power in Georgia.

After the Civil War, he was transferred to work in the

field of transport; in May 1922, becoming Deputy Commissar of Communications. From 1925 onwards, he became a follower of Trotsky and was eventually expelled from the Party in October 1927. He was reinstated in January 1930, though. He was sentenced to death at the January 1937 "show trial" on charges of espionage, terrorism and sabotage. He was executed forthwith. He has been subsequently completely rehabilitated.

SMILGA, IVAR TENISOVICH(1892-1937/1938)

He was born in 1892 in Liflyandsk guberniya, the son of a farmer/landowner. Judging by his own accounts, both his father and mother were intelligent people, his father being especially fond of reading to the young Smilga stories from Ancient Greek mythology. His father was, in the words of Smilga himself, an "enlightened democrat".

According to his own account, Smilga's political conscience was first stirred by the assassination of the reactionary Education Minister, Karpovich, in 1901 by the student, Bogolepov. His family would appear to have held something akin to a party to celebrate the event! Only the young Smilga thought it unseemly. However, as he began to read intensively, his views began to radically change and, by 1904-1905, he was already a convinced atheist. His political transformation was completed though when his father, who had previously taken part in the revolutionary events of 1905, was executed by a Tsarist firing squad in 1906. Smilga joined the local RSDLP committee in 1907. When he became a student in 1909, his Marxist outlook was further enhanced. In 1910, he was arrested for taking part in a demonstration in Moscow, protesting against the death penalty. He was sentenced to a month's imprisonment. In 1911, he was again arrested for carrying out underground Party work in the Lefortovsk raion and was sentenced to 3 years imprisonment in Vologda. He returned from the latter in 1914 and, just after the beginning of the First World War, entered the Petrograd committee of the RSDLP. He was again arrested in 1915 and only returned to Petrograd after the February 1917 Revolution.

At the Party's 1917 April Conference, he was elected onto the Party's CC, a post he held until 1920. During the October Revolution itself, he was Chairman of the oblast soviet of the committee of Russian soviets in Finland. In this post, he played an important role in the Finnish Revolution, at the beginning of 1918. It was also round about this time that he was appointed the RSFSR's first ambassador to Finland. A month later, March 1918, and Smilga was appointed onto the executive committee of the Petrograd Soviet and the editorial board of "Pravda"

itself.

During the Civil War, Smilga was transferred to military work, both as a member of various RMS, as well as a commander and, of course, Chief of PUR. Thus, throughout the Civil War, Smilga served on the RMS of 3rd Army(6.7.1918-22.10.1918); the Eastern Front(28.10.1918-3.4.1919); the South-Eastern Front(1.10.1919-16.1.1920); the Caucasus Front (16.1.1920-21.5.1920); the Western Front(30.5.1920-24.10.1920); the Southern Front(25.10.1920-10.12.1920) and, finally, back to the South-Eastern Front again, (26.1.1921-29.5.1921). His appointment as PUR's Chief came on 26th May 1919, a position he held officially until January 1921 and, on top of all that, Smilga had also been appointed a member of the Revolutionary Military Soviet of the Republic (RVSR), an appointment which lasted from 8th May 1919 to 23rd March 1923.

After the end of the Civil War, Smilga continued to hold a number of very important posts in the state apparatus: from 1921-1923, he was Deputy-Chairman of the Supreme Economic Council and Chief of the Main Administration for Energy. In the autumn of 1923, he became Deputy-Chairman of Gosplan, a position he held until 1926. Involved in the detailed preparation for the first Five-Year Plan, Krzhizhanovsky once said that his main assistants in such work were Smilga and G.Sokolnikov. Despite his work in helping to compile the necessary facts and figures for the First Five Year plan, Smilga was also Rector and Professor at the G.V.Plekhanov Institute for the National Economy between 1925-1927.

During the power struggle between Stalin and Trotsky, Smilga played an especially prominent part, making speeches on behalf of the oppositionists, as well as signing all the main documents and statements of the latter. Needless to say, this did not endear him to the ruling group in the Politburo at the time and following a decision of the 15th Party Congress, Smilga was expelled from the Party and, in January 1928, was exiled to the Siberian village of Kolpashevo. His term of exile forced him to reconsider his position within the opposition movement and, in 1929, alongwith Preobrazhensky and Radek, Smilga signed a petition requesting that the Party allow him back into the fold, so to speak. Thus, at the beginning of 1930, Smilga found his Party membership restored and he was quickly appointed Chief of the Mobilisation department of the Supreme Economic Council. However, he soon discovered that his former position and powers were not being restored to him fully, so he then took up literary work and became involved in the "Akademiya" publishing house, playing a direct part in the publication of a number of works of Saint-Simone, Erasmus of Rotterdam, Charles Dickens, etc.

Following the assassination of Kirov in December 1934,

Smilga was arrested on the night of 1st-2nd January 1935. In May 1936, his wife, a prominent Old Bolshevik in her own right, was also arrested. However, despite having arrested both Smilga and his wife, the authorities soon arrested her three brothers, as well, in 1936 and not one of them managed to survive the brutal regime of the camps. As regards Smilga himself, there seems to be some confusion as to the exact date of his death-according to two recent articles about him, he died either in January 1937 or in February 1938. However, neither of the two sources are in any doubt as to how he died: he was shot by a firing squad. He has only been recently fully rehabilitated.

SMIRNOV, IVAN NIKITICH(1880/1881-1936)

His father was a peasant from the Ryazan guberniya. Due to family circumstances, he was eventually sent to work in Moscow, when he was only 8 years old, where he managed to finish some elementary courses of education before being sent to work on the railway. He joined the RSDLP in 1899 and played an active role in the 1905 Revolution. Before the outbreak of the First World War, he had been arrested several times and, in total, spent some 6 years of his brief life in Tsarist prisons and a further 4 years of internal exile.

He was called up for military service in 1916 and served in Tomsk. At the beginning of the Civil War, he was sent by the Party's CC to work around Kazan; there, he was appointed a member of the RMS of the Eastern Front. Following the defeat of 5th Army, Smirnov found himself being appointed to the latter's RMS, a position he held onto until May 1920. However, in December 1919, the Party decided to use him in the extremely delicate work of organising Party cells in the enemy's rear and he began to devote more attention to that type of work than purely working in the military sphere. After the defeat of Kolchak, Smirnov was appointed Chairman of the Siberian Revolutionary Committee.

In 1921, he was made secretary to the Petrograd Bureau of the Party's CC. He worked in that post for 6 months, or so, and, immediately after that, was placed in charge of the defence industry sector of the Supreme Economic Council. In 1923, he was appointed to the post of People's Commissar for Posts and Telegraphs, a post he held until 1927. An ardent supporter of Trotsky, Smirnov was expelled from the Party at the 15th Party Congress and exiled to the Caucasus. However, following his

recantation, he was reinstated to the Party in 1930 and was re-employed in the economic sector. However, as one of the accused in the 1936 "show trial", Smirnov was executed by firing squad in 1936.

SUZDAL'TSEVA-TAGUNOVA, VALENTINA IVANOVNA(1897-1957)

From a peasant family. Joined the Bolsheviks in August 1917. In 1912, began her studies at the Higher Courses for Women in Moscow; in 1915, became a nurse in the army. In 1917, she became a member of the Union of Working-Class Youth, the "3rd International" brigade. Took part in the October 1917 Revolution in Moscow.

In 1918, she was transferred to work in the Commissariats for the Demobilisation of the Old Army and Industry in Petrograd. In the spring of 1918, she became secretary to the Arkhangelsk Party committee. In August 1918, she began working in the staff HQ of the Northern Front, becoming chairwoman of the Party collective of the front's military Party cells. She then headed the political department of 6th Army, as well as becoming secretary to the Vologda city Party committee. In the autumn of 1919, on the instruction of the Party's CC, she united the work of the civilian and military organs working in the rear of the region of the South-Eastern Front. In 1920, she was transferred to work in the political department of 9th Army. Between 1920-1924, she became Chief of the Agitation-Propaganda department of PUR. Afterwards, she was involved in a number of Party posts.

YAROSLAVSKY, EMEL'YAN MIKHAILOVICH(1878-1943)

(Real name: Miney Izrailovich Gubelman). His father had been a former political exile. Joined the RSDLP in 1898. In 1917, he became Chairman of the Yakutsk soviet; in July 1917, he was transferred to work in the Military organisation of the Moscow Party committee. He was a delegate to the 6th Party Congress. During the October Revolution, he was a member of the Military-Party centre and the Moscow Revolutionary Committee.

During the Brest-Litovsk negotiations, Yaroslavsky found himself supporting the Left Communists. In 1918-1919, he was put in charge of conducting the mobilisations of a number of guberniyas for the Red Army. He was a member of the Commission for the Struggle against Banditism in the Republic. From October 1919-March 1920,

he was Chairman of the Party's Perm guberniya committee. In April 1920, he was appointed a member of the CC's Siberian Bureau. He was a delegate to the 8th-10th Party Congresses. At the 8th Party Congress, he found himself in yet another opposition group, this time he was a member of the "military opposition". Between 1919-1921, Yaroslavsky enjoyed candidate-member status of the CC, in 1921-1922, he was promoted to full membership status. In 1921, he became secretary to the CC. From 1922 onwards, he was involved in a variety of political, academic, journalistic posts. From 1923-1934, he was a member of the praesidium of the Central Control Commission. He was also, at various times, a member of the Central Executive Committee and the Party's CC.

Regardless of what else could be written about Yaroslavsky, it should not be forgotten that Yaroslavsky played a not insignificant role in the ideological triumph of Stalin's cult of the personality, by helping the latter re-write the history of the Party in the early 1930s.

YEFREMOV, DOMINIK IVANOVICH(1881-1925)

A previously active member of the Petrograd "Union of Struggle for the Liberation of the Working-Class", Yefremov was a member of the RSDLP since 1902. He was also involved in the organisation of "Iskra". In March 1917, he was involved in Party work in the Zamoskvorets region of Moscow, moving onto working for the Party in the Sokolnichesk region of the city. From May-September 1918, he was secretary to the Moscow Party committee, subsequently being sent to the Southern Front. From October-December 1918, he was in charge of the latter's political department. From January-September 1919, he was both Chief of 10th Army's political department, as well as being a member of the latter's RMS. At the beginning of 1920, he was mobilised for transport work and, once he had completed a stint there, he then had a variety of Party and soviet posts.

YURENEV, KONSTANTIN KONSTANTINOVICH(1888-1938)

Real name was K.K.Krotovsky. He was born in the town of Dvinsk, Vitebsk guberniya. His father was a railway station guard. He received a basic education and, by the time he was 16, he was already taking part in illegal meetings of the local RSDLP organisation, becoming a

member of the RSDLP in 1905. In the autumn of 1906, he was put in charge of the railway district and the local committee's military-revolutionary organisations. In March 1908, he was elected a member of the Party's North-West oblast committee. Not long after that appointment, however, Yurenev was arrested and in April 1908 was sentenced to 3 years imprisonment in Arkhangelsk guberniya.

In 1911, he returned to St. Petersburg, where he began to contribute to the Party newspaper, "Pravda" and the journal, "Prosveshcheniye". He also helped in the organisation of illegal activity in the Narva region of the city. In 1913, along with a few others, he helped to organise the famous "mezhraiontsy" committee of RSDLP members, which tried to cooperate between both the Menshevik and Bolshevik factions of the RSDLP. In 1915, he was arrested again but, because of the war, sentence was never actually passed, so Yurenev was able to carry on with his Party work in St. Petersburg.

After the February Revolution, he was elected a member of the Executive Committee of the Petrograd soviet. At the First Congress of Soviets, he was elected onto the latter's Central Executive Committee, as well. He was a delegate to the 6th Party Congress and, at the latter Congress, the "mezhraiontsy" decided to formally amalgamate with the Bolsheviks. In September 1917, attached to the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet was a department of the Red Guard. Yurenev worked in this and eventually became Chairman of the Petrograd Red Guard's Main Staff. At the beginning of 1918, he was appointed a member of the All-Russian Collegiate for the Organisation and Administration of the Red Army and a member of the Collegiate of the People's Commissariat of Military Affairs.

In the spring of 1918, following the transfer of the Collegiate of the People's Commissariat of Military Affairs from Petrograd to Moscow, Yurenev was appointed to head the newly created All-Russian Bureau of Military Commissars. In the spring of 1919, he was appointed a member of the RMS for the Eastern Front. In the autumn of 1918, he was appointed a member of the Party's Siberian city committee, as well as being appointed to the RMS of the Western Front in October 1919.

At the beginning of 1920, he became a member of the Moscow Party committee, working in the Zamskvorets and Bauman regions of the city. In the summer of 1920, he was elected Chairman of the Kursk guberniya executive committee and a member of the praesidium of the guberniya committee. In June 1920, he was transferred to the People's Commissariat of Military Affairs and was Soviet ambassador to Bukhara(1921); Latvia(1922); Czechoslovakia(1923); Italy(1924); Persia(1925); Austria(1927); Japan(1933); Germany(1937). Like many of

his generation of Party leaders and activists, Yurenev was to be caught up in the purges and, in 1938, was executed.

ZEMLYACHKA, ROZALIYA SAMOILOVNA(1876-1947)

Joined the RSDLP in 1896. From February 1917-August 1918, she was secretary to the Moscow committee of the RSDLP(Bolsheviks). She was a delegate to the 7th (April) Conference and the 6th Party Congress. During the 1917 October Revolution, she was a member of the Military-Revolutionary Committee of the Rogozh raion, Moscow. In August 1918, she was sent to the Orsha to aid in the transfer of troops to the Eastern Front. In September 1918, she was appointed commissar to the Northern-Dvinsk Rifle Brigade, then serving on the Eastern Front. From January-July 1919, she was Chief of the political department of 8th Army. She was a delegate to the 8th Party Congress. From October 1919-November 1920, she was Chief of the political department of 13th Army. For her military and political work in the Red Army, she was awarded the Order of the Red Banner in 1921. From November 1920 onwards, she was involved in a number of Party and state posts. In 1924, she was appointed a member of the Central Control Commission; in 1939, she became a member of the Party's CC. From 1939-1943, she was Deputy-Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars and, at various times, a member of the Central Executive Committee of the Party.

Sources used in the compilation of this appendix:

Various issues of the following primary newspapers and journals:

"Izvestiya Narodnogo Komissariat po Voennym Delam", (1919-1920);

"Pravda", (1918-1919);

"Izvestiya Moskovskogo Soveta rabochikh, krestyanskikh i soldatskikh deputatov", (1918-1920);

"Politrabotnik", (1920-1924);

"Voennaya Mysl", (1918-1919).

Secondary sources(encyclopaedias):

B.Granat, "Deyateli Soiuza Sovetskikh Sotsialisticheskikh Respublik i Oktyabrskoi Revoliutsii (Avtobiografii i biografii)." M.1929, pts.1-3.

S.S.Khromov, ed., "Grazhdanskaya voina i voennaya interventsia v SSSR. Entsiklopediya." 1st ed., M.1983.

S.S.Khromov, ed., "Grazhdanskaya voina i voennaya interventsia v SSSR. Entsiklopediya." 2nd ed., M.1987.

G.N.Golikov, M.I.Kuznetsov, "Velikaya Oktyabrskaya Sotsialisticheskaya Revoliutsiya. Entsiklopediya." M.1977.

P.A.Golub, Yu.I.Korablev, M.I.Kuznetsov, "Velikaya Oktyabrskaya Sotsialisticheskaya Revoliutsiya. Entsiklopediya." M.1987.

(Other materials):

"Partiino-politicheskaya rabota v Krasnoi Armii, (aprel 1918-fevral 1919). Dokumenty." Vol.1, M.1961.

"Direktivnyy komandovaniye frontov Krasnoi Armii (1917-1922 gg.) Sbornik dokumentov i materialov v 4-kh tomakh." Vol.4, M.1978.

Bobeyko, V. "Christain Rakovsky i borba protiv rumainskoi kontrrevoliutsii, (yanvar-mart 1918 goda)." "Kommunist Moldavii", pt.7, pp.82-89, M.1988;

Dmitriev, Yu. "Moi tovarishch Smilga", "Gorizont", pt.5, pp.20-23, Riga, USSR, 1988.

Leyberov, Igor. "Leninskii poslanets v Kavkaze." "Literaturnaya Gruzia", No.3, pp.188-203, M.1988. (Article is on L.P.Serebryakov).

Nenarokov, A.; Vrachev, I. "Nikto ne imeet pravo lishat nas initsiativy...", "Nauka i zhizn", pt.6, pp.81-85, M.1988. (Article is on I.T.Smilga).

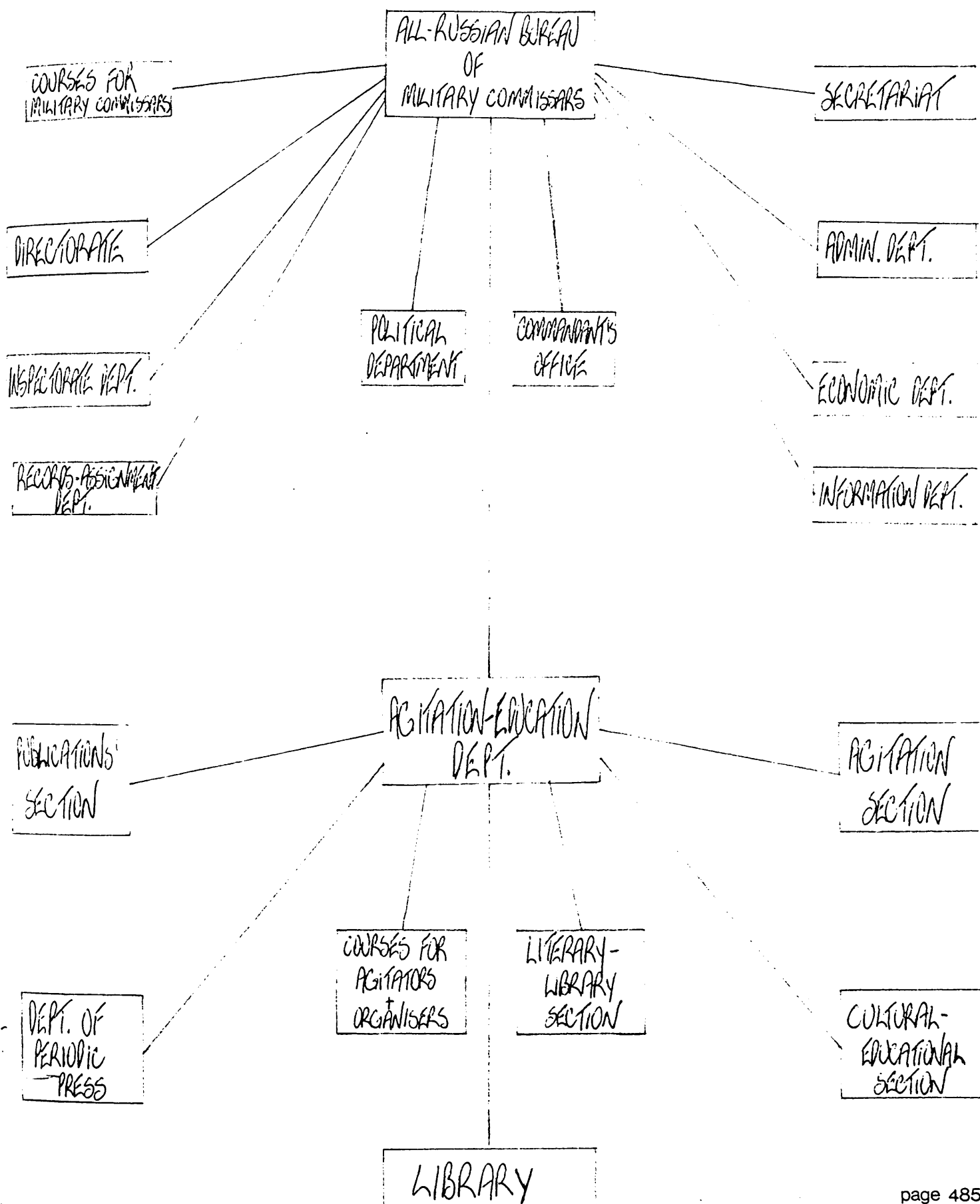
(English materials used):

Jan M. Meijer, "The Trotsky Papers, 1917-1922." Vol.1, 1917-1919. London, 1964.

"The Verkhne-Uralsk isolation prison camp for Political Offenders." G.Saunders, "SAMIZDAT. Voices of the Soviet opposition." New York, 1974.

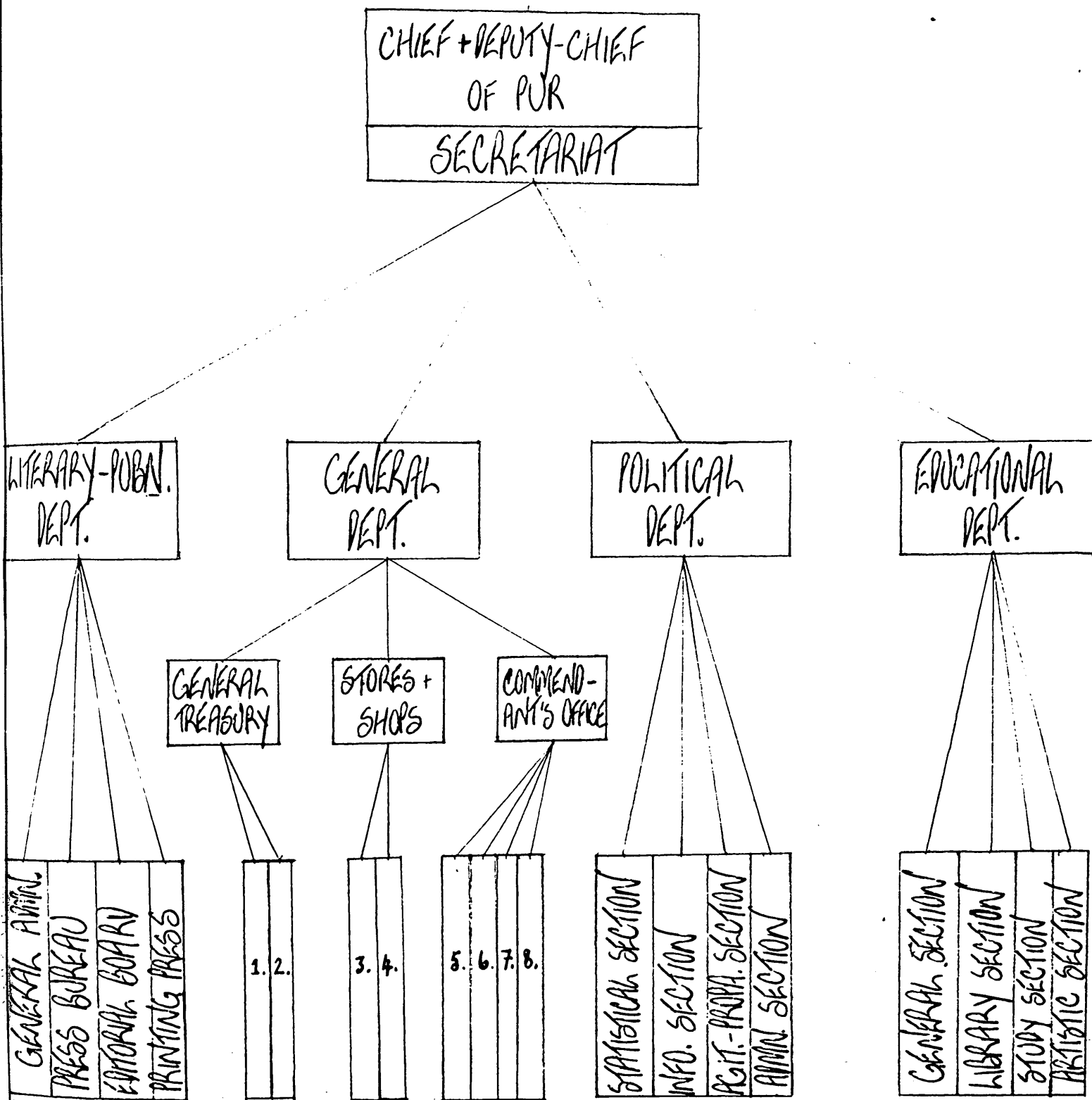
APPENDIX 3 -THE ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF VBVK AT THE END OF 1918.

(Source: I. Ignat'ev, "Istoriya partpolitapparata Vooruzhennykh Sil Soiuza SSR. Kratkii ocherk." M. 1947, p. 16).



Diagrammatic representation of the internal organisational structure of PUR in May

1919.



Key to diagram on p.486:-

- 1-main clerical department;
- 2-general section;
- 3-office;
- 4-despatches;
- 5-treasury;
- 6-economics section;
- 7-communication'section;
- 8-medical-hygiene section.

Source: I.Ignatyev, "Istoriya partpolitapparata Vooruzhennykh Sil Soiuza SSR. Kratkiy ocherk." M.1947, p.37.

The cultural-educational apparatus of the Red Army (January-October 1919).

<u>Organisation</u>	<u>1st January</u>	<u>1st May</u>	<u>1st October</u>
Schools	"	674	3,800
Courses	"	15	8
Red Army universities	"	"	"
Clubs	32	642	1,315
Theatres	"	33	250
Cinemas	"	12	161
Drama circles	"	"	"
Musical/sport groups	"	"	143
Libraries	"	1,614	2,392
Izba-reading rooms	"	800	400

(Source: "Politrabotnik", January 1920, no.1, p.12. "= figures n.a.")

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

BOOKS (RUSSIAN)

- Antonov-Ovseenko, V.A. "Zapiski o grazhdanskoi voine." 4 vols., M.1924-1933.
- Aralov, S.I. "V.I.Lenin i Krasnaya Armiya." M.1958.
- _____. "Lenin vel nas k pobede: vospominania." M.1962.
- Azovtsev, N.N. ed. "Grazhdanskaya voina v SSSR." 2 vols., M.1981-1986.
- Babin, Ye. "Kak organizovat rotnoyu yacheyku (po dokladu tov. Podvoiskogo)." Kiev, 1919.
- Bedzhanyan, R.M. "Kommunisticheskaya partiya-organizator aktivnogo uchastiya Krasnoi Armii v sotsialisticheskom stroitelstve (1918-1932 gg)." M.1969. Avtoreferat.
- Belov, G.A. ed. "Direktivy glavnogo komandovaniya Krasnoi Armii (1917-1920): sbornik dokumentov." M.1969.
- Berlov, V.I. "V plameni, v prokhovym dymu...Zapiski politkomissara." Stavropol. 1973.
- Berzin, R.I. "Etapy v stroitelstve Krasnoi Armii." Kharkov, 1920.
- "Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya." Vol.47, M.1940.
- Bonch-Bruevich, M.D. "Vsya vlast sovetam." M.1958.
- Bondarenko, N.P. "Kommunisticheskaya partoya-organizator deyatelnosti voennykh komissarov v period inostrannoi voennoi interventsii i grazhdanskoi voyny (po materialam Ukrainy)." Avtoreferat, Kharkov, 1972.
- Bronin, Ya. "Lenin i Krasnaya Armiya." M.1925.
- Britov, V.V. "Rozhdenie Krasnoi Armii." M.1961.
- Bubnov, A.S. "Grazhdanskaya voina, 1918-1921." 3 vols., M.1928.
- _____. "O Krasnoi Armii." M.1958.
- Bukov, K. "V bitve velikoi." M.1960.
- "Dekrety Sovetskoi vlasti." 12 vols., M.1954-1986.

- "X let Krasnoi Armii: Albom diagramm." M.1928.
- "Devyaty sezd RKP(B). Mart-aprel 1920 goda. Protokoly." M.1960
- Epishev, A.A. ed. "KPSS I voennoe stroitelstvo." M.1982.
- _____. ed. "Ideologicheskaya rabota v Vooruzhennykh Silakh SSSR." M.1983.
- Fediukin, S.A. "Sovetskaya vlast i burzhuaiznyye spetsialisty." M.1965.
- Frenkin, M. "Russkaya armiya i revoliutsiya." Munich, 1978.
- Furtenko, P.S. "Sozdanie vysshikh i tsentralnykh organov Sovetskogo voennogo upravleniya b gody inostrannoi voennoi interventsii i grazhdanskoi voyny v SSSR. 1917-1920 gg." Avtoreferat, M.1954.
- Ganin, N.I. "Rol voenkomov v sozdanii i ukreplenii Krasnoi Armii (1918-1920 gg)." M.1958.
- "Geroi Oktyabrya." 2 vols., Leningrad, 1967.
- Geronimus, A. "Partiya i Krasnaya Armiya." M.1928.
- _____. "Osnovnye printsipy partiino-politicheskoi raboty v RKKA v mirnoe i voennoe vremya." Leningrad, 1930.
- "Godovshchina pervoi revoliutsionnoi armii." M.1920.
- Gorin, V. "Nashi zadachi po politicheskoi vospitaniyu Krasnoi Armii." M.1919.
- Granat, Br. ed. "Deyateli Soiuza Sovetskikh Sotsialisticheskikh Respublik i Oktyabrskoi Revoliutsii (avtobiografii i biografii)." M.1929.
- Grechko, A.A. ed. "Sovetskaya voennaya entsiklopediya." 8 vols., M.1976-1980.
- Gridasov, P.I. "Sozdanie partiino-politicheskogo apparata Krasnoi Armii v period deyatelnosti Vserossiiskogo buro Voennykh Komissarov (aprel 1918-aprel 1919 g)." Avtoreferat, Leningrad 1973.
- Gusev, S.I. "Uroki grazhdanskoi voyny." M.1921.
- _____. "Grazhdanskaya voina i Krasnaya Armiya." M.1958.

Ignatyev, I. "Istoriya partpolitapparata Vooruzhenykh Sil Soiuza SSR. Kratkiy ocherk." M.1947.

Iovlev, A.M. "Deyatelnost KPSS po podgotovke voennykh kadrov." M.1976.

"Istoria grazhdanskoi voiny v SSSR." 3 vols., M.1957-1961.

"Istoria Kommunisticheskoi partii Sovetskogo Soiuza." Vol.3, book 2, M.1968.

"Istoria ordena Lenina Leningradskogo voennogo okruga." M.1974.

"Iz istorii grazhdanskoi voiny i interventsii. 1917-1922 gg." M.1974.

Kakurin, N. "Kak srazhalas revoliutsiya." 2 vols., M.1925-1926.

Kamenev, S.S. "Zapiski o Grazhdanskoi voine i voennom stroitelstve." M.1963.

Katkov, N.F. "Propagandistkaya i organizatsionnaya rabota Kommunisticheskoi partii v gody voennoi interventsii i grazhdanskoi voiny leto 1918-1920 gg)." Leningrad, 1959.

Kharitonov, N.N. "Politicheskii apparat Krasnoi Armii." Moscow-Leningrad, 1929.

Kiriukhin, N.I. "Iz dnevnika voennogo komissara. Grazhdanskaya voina 1918-1919." M.1928.

Kitayev, M.A. "Partiinoe stroitelstvo v gody grazhdanskoi voiny." M.1975.

Khromov, S.S. ed. "Grazhdanskaya voina i voennaya interventsia. Entsiklopedia." 1st ed., M.1983; 2nd ed., M.1987.

Kolosov, P.I. "Kommunisticheskaya partiya v period inostrannoi voennoi interventsii i grazhdanskoi voiny (1918-1920 gody)." M.1960.

Kolychev, V.G. "Partiino-politicheskaya rabota v Krasnoi Armii v gody grazhdanskoi voiny. 1918-1920." M.1979.

"Komissary. Sbornik posvyashchaetsya XX-letiyu kuznitsy bolshevistskikh komissarov." M.1939.

Konev, A.M. "Krasnaya gvardiya na zashchite Oktiabrya." M.1978.

Konovalov, A. "Revoliutsiei prizvanniy." M.1971.

Koritsky, N.I. ed. "Marshal Tukhachevsky: vospominaniia družei i soratnikov." M.1965.

Korotkov, I.A. "Istoria sovetskoi voennoi mysli: kratkii ocherk 1917-iyun 1941." M.1980.

Kosmachev, K.H. "Kommunisticheskaya partiya-rukovoditel sotsialisticheskoi revoliutsii v derevne (1918 g)." Smolensk, 1970.

"KPSS i stroitelstvo vooruzhenykh sil SSSR (1918-iyun 1941)." M.1959.

"KPSS v rezoliutsiyakh i resheniyakh sezdov, konferentsiy i plenumov TsK." Vol.2, M.1983.

Kramarov, G.M. "Soldat revoliutsii: O Sergee Ivanoviche Guseve." M.1958.

"Krasnaya Armiya. (Vestnik Voennno-Nauchnogo Obshchestva pri Voennoi Akademii)." M.1921.

"Krasnaya Armiya, 23 fevralya 1918 g.-23 fevralya 1922 g. Chetyre gody." M.1922.

"Kratkii ocherk kulturno-politicheskoi raboty v Krasnoi Armii za 1918 god." M.1919.

Krivosheenkova, E.F. "Sozdanie i deyatelnost politorganov armiy Vostochnogo fronta s interventami i belogvardeitsami." Avtoreferat, M.1972.

Kublanov, A.L. "Sovet Rabochey i Krestianskoi Oborony (noyabr 1918-mart 1920 g)." Leningrad, 1975.

Kuchkin, A.P. "V boyakh i pokhodakh ot Volgi do Yeniseya: Zapiski voennogo komissara." M.1969.

Lindov, G. "O politicheskoi rabote i politicheskikh rabotnikakh na fronte." Kharkov, 1919.

Lipitsky, S.V. "Voennaya deyatelnost TsK RKP(B), 1917-1920." M.1973.

_____. "Leniniskoe rukovodstvo oborony strany. Sozdanie i deyatelnost vysshikh organov rukovodstva oborony Sovetskoi respubliki, 1917-1920." M.1979.

Lisenko, M.M. "Kulturnaya revoliutsiya v SSSR i armiya." M.1977.

Maisky, I.M. ed. "Oktyabr i grazhdanskaya voina v SSSR: sbornik statei k 7-letiyu akademika I.I.Mintsa." M.1966.

Mamedsakhatov, D. "Politrabota na Zakaspiiskom fronte v 1918-1920 godakh." Ashkhabad, 1974.

Mansvetov, N.V. "Nikolai Tolmachev, 1895-1919." Leningrad, 1960.

"Marksizm-Leninizm o voine i armii." M.1932.

Matugin, A.A. "Rabochii klass v gody vosstanovleniya narodnogo khozyaistva (1921-1925)." M.1962.

Mints, I.I. ed. "Revoliutsionnoe dvizhenie v Russkoi armii 1917 godu: sbornik statei." M.1980.

_____. "Boevoe sidruzhestvo Sovetskikh respublik. 1919-1922 gg." M.1982.

_____. "God 1918-y." M.1982.

_____. ed. "Velikii Oktyabr i zashchita ego zavoevaniy." Vol.2 M.1987.

Morozov, V. "Ot Krasnoi gvardii k Krasnoi armii." M.1958.

Mutovkin, N.S. "Voenno-politicheskii soiuz rabocheho klassa i trudovogo krestianstva v SSSR v period inostrannoi voennoi interventsii i grazhdanskoii voiny (1918-1920 gody)." M.1965.

Nenarokov, A.P. "Vostochniy front." M.1969.

"Ordena Lenina Moskovskii voenniy okrug." 2nd ed., M.1977.

"Oktyabrskaya revoliutsiya i Narodnoe Prosveshchenie." Smolensk, 1920.

"Ocherki istorii Leningradskoi organizatsii KPSS. Chast II, noyabr 1917-1945." Leningrad, 1968.

Ocherki istorii Moskovskoi organizatsii." Vol.2, M.1983.

"Partiino-politicheskaya rabota v Krasnoi Armii. Dokumenty." 2 vols., M.1961-1964.

"Partiino-politicheskaya rabota v Vooruzhennykh Silakh SSSR, 1918-1973 gg. Istoricheskii ocherk." M.1974.

"Perepiska sekretariata TsK RKP(B) s mestnymi partiynymi organizatsiyami. Noyabr-dekbar 1918 g." Vol.5, M.1970.

"Perepiska sekretariata TsK RKP(B) s mestnymi partiynymi organizatsiyami. Yanvar-mart 1919 g." Vol.6, M.1971.

"Perepiska sekretariata TsK RKP(B) s mestnymi partiynymi organizatsiyami. Iyun-iyul 1919 g." Vol.8, M.1974.

Petrov, Yu.P. "Stroitelstvo partiino-politicheskogo apparata Sovetskoi Armii (1918-1920 gg)." M.1952.

_____. "Voennye komissary v gody grazhdanskoi voiny (1918-1920 gg)." M.1956.

_____. "KPSS-rukovoditel i vospitatel Krasnoi Armii (1918-1920 gg)." M.1961.

_____. "Partiino stroitelstvo v sovetskoi armii i flota: deyatelnost KPSS po sozdanii i ukreplenii politorganov, partoynykh i komsomolskikh organizatsii v vooruzhennykh silakh (1918-1961 gg)." M.1961.

Petukhov, I. "Partiinaya organizatsiya i partiinaya rabota v RKKA." Moscow-Leningrad, 1928.

Pirogov, V.M. "V.I.Lenin i Vysshiy Voenniy Sovet Respubliki." Voronezh 1984.

Polikarpov, V.D. ed. "Etapy bolshogo puti." M.1963.

"Politorgany Sovetskikh Vooruzhennykh Silakh." M.1984.

"Politotdeltsy." M.1967.

"Polozheniya i instruktsii po postanovke politicheskoprosvetitelnoi raboty v Krasnoi Armii." M.1919.

Portnov, V.M., Slavin, M.M. "Pravovye osnovy stroitelstva Krasnoi Armii. 1918-1920 gg." M.1985.

Potekhin, M.N. "Perviy Sovet proletarskoi diktatury." Leningrad, 1966.

"Protokoly Tsentralnogo Komiteta RSDRP(B). Avgust 1917-fevral 1918." M.1958.

Pukhov, G.S. "Kak vooruzhalsya Petrograd (Stroitelstvo Krasnoi Armii v Petrogradskom voennom okruge v 1918-1919 gg)." M.1933.

Putyrsky, E. "Petrogradskie rabochie v borbe za sozdanie Krasnoi Armii." Leningrad, 1958.

"Rabochii klass-vedushchaya sila Oktyabrskoi sotsialisticheskoi revoliutsii." M.1976.

"Revoliutsiya i voina. Oktyabr 1917-1921." Smolensk, 1921.

"Revoliutsionnoe dvizhenie v Rossii v avguste 1917 g. Razгром kornilovskogo myatezha." M.1959.

Rusakova, E.M. "Ideologicheskaya rabota Kommunisticheskoi partii v derevne b 1919-1920 gg." Minsk, 1969.

"Rukovodstvo dlya bibliotekarey Krasnoi Armii." Orel, 1920.

Savko, N. "Ocherki po istorii partiinoi organizatsii v Krasnoi Armii. 1918-1923." Moscow-Leningrad, 1928.

"Sbornik vospominan k IV godovshchine Krasnoi Armii. 1918-1922." M.1922.

"Sbornik voennykh zakonopolozheniy U.S.S.R. dlya rukovodstva volostnym voennym komissariatam." Kiev, 1919.

"Sbornik sekretnykh prikazov R.V.S.R. 1919 g." M.1919.

Shatagin, N.I. "Organizatsiya i stroitelstvo Sovetskoj Armii v period inostrannoj voennoj interventsii i grazhdanskoi voiny." M.1954.

Shilko, K.P. "Ideologicheskaya rabota Kommunisticheskoi partii v pervye gody Sovetskoj vlasti (oktyabr 1917-mart 1919 g)." Minsk, 1975.

Shumilov, M.I. "Vo glave oborony severa Rossii v 1918-1920 gg." Petrozavodsk, 1967.

Shcherbak, V.M. "Bolshevistskaya agitatsiya i propaganda (oktyabr 1917-mart 1919 gg)." M.1969.

Slavin, M.M. "Revvoensovety v 1918-1919 gg: istoriko-iuridicheskii ocherk." M.1974.

Suzdaltseva, V.I. "Partiinaya rabota na Severnom fronte. 1918-1919 gg." Arkhangelsk, 1936.

Tal, B. "Istoriya Krasnoi Armii." Moscow-Leningrad, 1929.

Tarasov, E.P. "Nikolai Ilyich Podvoisky." M.1964.

Tarasov-Rodionov, A. "Proletarskie perspektivy voennogo dela." M.1919.

Telpukhovskiy, B.S. "KPSS vo glave stroitelstva Vooruzhennykh Sil SSSR." M.1983.

Trotsky, L.D. "Kak vooruzhalas revoliutsiya." 3 vols, M.1923-1925.

Tsvetayev, N.N. "Voennye voprosy v resheniyakh VIII sezda RKP(B)." M.1960.

Umnov, A.S. "Grazhdanskaya voina i srednee krestianstvo (1918-1920 gg)." M.1959.

Ustinkin, S.V. "Sovetskaya istoriografia agitatsionno-propagandistskoi deyatel'nosti partii bolshevikov v Krasnoi Armii v gody grazhdanskoi voyny i inostrannoi interventsii (1918-1920 gg)." Gorky, 1983.

Vatsetis, I.I. "Glavnokomanduiushchii vsemi vooruzhennymi silami respubliki I.I.Vatsetis: sbornik dokumentov." Riga, 1978.

Vdovin, M.N. "V.I.Lenin o preodolenii protivorechiy pri stroitel'stve Krasnoi Armii v gody grazhdanskoi voyny i inostrannoi interventsii." Gorky, 1979.

Ventsov, S. "Ot Krasnoi gvardii k vooruzhennomu narodu." Moscow-Leningrad, 1927.

Volkov, I.M. "Deyatel'nost Vserossiyskoi kollegii po formirovaniyu Krasnoi Armii (dekabr 1917 g.-may 1918 g)." Avtoreferat, M.1951.

Voropaev, D.A., Iovlev, A.M. "Borba KPSS za sozdanie voennykh kadrov." M.1960.

"Vosmoiye sezdy RKP(B). Mart 1919 goda. Protokoly." M.1959.

"Vsearmeyskiye soveshchaniya politrabotnikov, 1918-1940 (rezoliutsii)." M.1984.

Vyrvich, A. "Krasnaya Armiya v borbe s negramotnostyu." M.1925.

Yaroslavsky, E.M. "Kulturno-prosvetitel'naya rabota v Krasnoi Armii (leksiya na donositel'nykh kursakh komandnogo sostava)." M.1919.

_____. "Partiya bolshevikov v period inostrannoi voennoi interventsii i grazhdanskoi voyny (1918-1920 gody)." M.1945.

_____. "Krasnaya Armiya." M.1919.

Zakharov, M.V. ed. "50 let vooruzhennykh sil SSSR." M.1968.

"Zashchita Velikogo Oktyabrya." M.1982.

Zhivilov, B.M. "Voennye komissary-rukovoditeli i organizatory partiino-politicheskoi raboty v Krasnoi Armii v gody inostrannoi voennoi interventsii i grazhdanskoi voiny (1918-1920 gg)." Avtoreferat, M.1971.

Zhmurovsky, D.P. "Organizatorskaya rabota Kommunisticheskoi partii v derevne (1918-1920 gg)." Minsk, 1970.

"Respublika Sovetov: edinstvo fronta i tyla, 1918-1920." Minsk, 1980.

Zinoviev, M. "Kak byl vpolnen leninskii dekret." M.1961

BOOKS (ENGLISH):-

Abramsky, Chimen ed. "Essays in Honour of E.H.Carr." London, 1974.

Adelamn, J.R. "The Revoluntionary Armies: The historical development of the Soviet and the Chinese People's Liberation Armies." Westport, Greenwood Press, 1980.

Bonch-Bruevich, M.D. "From Tsarist General to Red Army Commander." M. 1966.

Bradley, C.F. "Civil War in Russia." NY, 1975.

Deutscher, I. "The Prophet Unarmed: Trotsky 1921-1929." Oxford, 1954.

Erickson, J. "The Soviet High Command: a Military-Political History, 1918-1941." London, 1962.

Fedotoff White, D. "Th Growth of the Red Army." Princeton University Press, 1944.

Footman, D. "Civil War in Russia." Faber and Faber, 1961.

Liddel-Hart, B.H. "The Soviet Army." London, 1956.

Macintosh, M. "The Soviet Juggernaut: A History of the Soviet Armed Forces." NY, 1967.

Meijer, J. ed. "The Trotsky Papers." The Hague, 2 vols., 1964.

Pipes, R. ed. "Revolutionary Russia." Cambridge, Mass., 1968.

Wollenberg, E. "The Red Army." London, 1938.

ARTICLES (RUSSIAN):-

Andreyev, V. "Stalinskie komissary." ('Voенно-istoricheskii zhurnal', No.5, M.1939).

Anuchin, S.A. "Politiko-prosvetitelnaya rabota v Krasnoi Armii." ('Politrabotnik', No.9, M.1920).

Batlan, M. "Iz istorii podgotovki komandnykh kadrov na zapadnom fronte v 1918-1920 gg." ('Voенно-istoricheskii zhurnal', No.12, M.1967).

Bazanov, M. "Voенный вопрос na VIII seзде RKP(B)." ('Partiino-politicheskaya rabota v RKKA.' No.5, M.1939).

Beloborodov, A.G. "V dni borby." ('Politrabotnik', No.4-5, M.1924).

"Biblioteka politrabotnika." ('Politrabotnik', No.4, M.1920).

"Bibliotechnoe delo v Krasnoi Armii. Iz otcheta za 1 yan.-1 iyul 1920 g." ('Politrabotnik', No.6, M.1920).

Blumin, I. "Serezniy vopros. (O borbe s antisemitizmom)." ('Politrabotnik', No.11, M.1920).

Chernevsky, V. "Desyat let partiinoi organizatsii." ('Voенный Vestnik', No.6, M.1929).

Edelshtein, A. "Sanitarnoe posveshchenie v Krasnoi Armii." ('Politrabotnik', No.4, M.1922).

Faydysh, V. "Politorgany i ikh rabota b grazhdanskuyu voyny." ('Politrabotnik', N.4-5, M.1924).

Furmanov, D. "Za i protiv (k voprusu o gryadushchey likvidatsii instituta voennykh komissarov)." ('Politrabotnik', No.2, M.1920).

Geronimus, A. "Partiya i voенный вопрос v period grazhdanskoi voyny." ('Voенный Vestnik', Nos. 8, 10, 13, 15, 18. M.1928).

Goldberg, A. "Krasnoarmeyskaya pechat na frontakh grazhdanskoi voiny." ('Voenkor', No.11, M.1934).

Golub, P.A. "Kogda byl uchrezhden institut voennykh komissarov?" ('Voprosy istorii KPSS', No.4, M.1962).

Iovlev, A. "Pervye shagi po vvedeniiu edinonachaliya v krasnoi armii." ('Voенно-istoricheskii zhurnal', No.6, M.1968).

_____. "Stanovlenie i razvitie voенно uchebnykh zavedenii krasnoi armii." ('Voенно-istoricheskii zhurnal', No.9, M.1974).

"Iz otcheta o deyatelnosti literaturno-izdatelskogo otdela P.U.R.V.S.R. (s iunya 1919 g. po 1 iulya 1920 g)." ('Politrabotnik', No.5, M.1920).

"K XX godovshchine Raboche-krestianskoi Krasnoi Armii. (Iz dokumentov po istorii organizatsii Krasnoi Armii)." ('Krasniy Arkhiv', vol.1 (86), M.1938).

Kadishev, A. "Politicheskoe vospitanie Krasnoi Armii." ('Politrabotnik', No.1-2, M.1923).

_____. "Boevoi soiuz rabochego klassa i krestianstva v protsesse organizatsii Krasnoi Armii." ('Voенniy Vestnik', No.8, M.1928).

Kasparova, V. "Vseburvoenkom." ('Politrabotnik', No.4-5, M.1924).

_____. "Krasnaya Armiya i prosveshchenie." ('Politrabotnik', No.2, M.1920).

Khlebtsevich, E. "Kulturno-prosvetitelnaya rabota. Snabzheni Krasnoi Armii bibliotekami." ('Politrabotnik', No.2, M.1920).

_____. "Bibliotechnoe delo v Krasnoi Armii. (Rabota za mart s.g.)." ('Politrabotnik', No.4, M.1920).

_____. "Bibliotechnoe delo v Krasnoi Armii (1918-1922 g.)." ('Politrabotnik', No.11, M.1922).

Kliatskin, S.M. "Rozhdenie Raboche-Krestianskoi Krasnoi Armii. (Voprosy stroitelstva RKKA v pervoi polovine 1918 g.)" ('Istoricheskii zhurnal', No.7-8, M.1941).

_____. "Na zare Krasnoi Armii." ('Voенно-istoricheskii zhurnal', No.3, M.1967).

Kliatskin, S.M. "Problemy voennogo stroitelstva na zavershaiashchem etape grazhdanskoi voiny". ('Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal', No.3, M.1964).

Kollantai, A. "Krasniy Front i rabotnitsa." ('Revoliutsionnaya voina. Sbornik perviy.') M.1919.

Kossakovsky, Z.M. "O postanovke informatsii v Krasnoi Armii." ('Politrabotnik', No.5, M.1920).

Krylenko, N. "Smert staroi armii." ('Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal', Nos.11-12, M.1964).

Kuzmin, N. "Boenno-uchebnie zavedeniya v grazhdanskuyu voynu (nemnogo istorii)." ('Voenniy Vestnik', No.7, M.1928).

_____. "Politorgany Krasnoi Armii v period grazhdanskoi voiny." ('Partiino-politicheskaya rabota v RKKA', No.5, M.1939).

_____. "Voennye komissary v gody grazhdanskoi voiny." ('Partiino-politicheskaya rabota v RKKA', No.1, M.1939).

Leonov, O. "Voennoe izdatelstvo za pyat let." ('Politrabotnik', No.11, 1922).

Levenshtein, M. "Vazhnoe zveno voennogo upravleniya." ('Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal', No.6, M.1976).

Lunin, V. "Kogda byl uchrezhden institut voennykh komissarov?" ('Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal', No.9, M.1961).

Nenarokov, A.P. "Glavkom S.S.Kamenev." ('Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal', No.3, M.1966).

Nosov, S.P. "K istorii stroitelstva Krasnoi Armii (Yanvar-May 1918)." ('Istoricheskii arkhiv', No.6, M.1959).

"Material 'k desyatoi godovshchine Krasnoi Armii. Politprosvetitelanaya rabota v Krasnoi Armii za desyat let." ('Voenniy Vestnik', No.4, M.1928).

Mints, I. "Kak zarozhdalas Kranaya Armiya." ('Bolshevik', No.4, M.1938).

Mishchenko, S. "K trekhletiyu Krasnoi Voennoi Akademii." ('Krasnaya Armiya', Nos.3-4, M.1921).

Orlinsky, A. "Krasnaya Armiya boevogo perioda v tsifrakh." ('Politrabotnik', No.1-2, M.1923).

Orlov, V. "V.I.Lenin, VKP(B) i Krasnaya Armiya."
('Voenniy Vestnik', No.7, M.1928).

"Otchet Revvoensoveta Respubliki za 1917-1919 gg."
('Istoricheskii arkhiv', No.1, M.1956).

Petrovsky, D. "Russkaia revoliutsiya i stroitelstvo v
Krasnoi Armii." ('Voennaya nauka i revoliutsiya', Bk.1,
M.1921).

Podvoisky, N.I. "Kommunisticheskoe vospitanie Krasnoi
Armii." ('Krasnaya Armiya', October 1918, M.)

_____. Programma rabot Kommunisticheskoi partii po
sozdaniyu trekhmillionoi armii. (Doklad predstavleniy
TsK Rossiiskoi Kommunisticheskoi partii)."
('Revoliutsionnaya voyna. Sbornik perviy', M.1919).

_____. "O sozdanii Krasnoi Armii." ('Voenno-istoricheskii
zhurnal', No.12, M.1968).

"Politikoprosvetitelnaya rabota v Krasnoi Armii (1918-1920
gg)." ('Istoricheskii arkhiv', No.6, M.1959).

Popov, A.S. "Iz istorii revvoensoveta respubliki."
('Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal', No.2, M.1967).

Potapov, N.M. "Iz istorii voennogo stroitelstva sovetskoi
respubliki v pervie mesiatsy posle oktiabrya."
('Istoricheskii arkhiv', No.1, M.1962).

_____. "Zapiski o pervykh shagakh sovetskogo voennog
stroitelstva." ('Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal', No.1,
M.1968).

"Programma shestinedelnykh kursov politicheskoi gramoty
pri politotdelakh armiy i politprosvetakh gubvoenkomatov."
('Politrabotnik', No.3, M.1920).

"Raboty Vserossisskogo soveshchaniya politrabotnikov
Krasnoi Armii i Flota." ('Politrabotnik', No.1, M.1921).

"Razvitie politirganov v Krasnoi Armii (s 1917 g. po 1922
g.)." ('Politrabotnik', No.11, M.1922).

Rakovsky, Ch. "Rabota PUR'a." ('Politrabotnik', No.1 ,
M.1920).

_____. "Dusha pobedy. K istorii Krasnoi Armii."
('Kommunisticheskii internatsional', No.13, M.1920).

_____. "Itogi sezda politprosvetrabotnikov."
('Politrabotnik', No.1, M.1920).

Reysner, M. "Obshchenarodnaya armiya-Belaya armiya-Krasnaya armiya i borba klassov." ('Revoliutsionnaya voina. Sbornik perviy', M.1919).

Rostov, I. "Prosveshchenie na fronte." ('Politrabotnik', No.10, M.1922).

"Svodka politicheskoi i prosvetitelnoi raboty v Krasnoi Armii." ('Politrabotnik', No.8, M.1920).

Smilga, I.T. "Sezd kommunistov." ('Voennaya Mysl', No.2, M.1919).

_____. "K voprosu o stroitelstve Krasnoi Armii." ('Politrabotnik', No.1, M.1920).

_____. "Rech na vtorom sezde voennykh rabotnikov." ('Politrabotnik', No.1, M.1921).

_____. "K voprosu o politicheskoi rabote v Krasnoi Armii." ('Politrabotnik', No.11, M.1920).

_____. "Komandiry, komissary i kommunisty." ('Politrabotnik', No.2, M.1920).

_____. "Osnovanie PUR'a." ('Politrabotnik', No.4-5, M.1924).

Sofinov, P.G. "Permskaya katastrofiya i likvidatsiya yeye posledstviy." ('Istoricheskie zapiski', vol.30, M.1949).

Sychev, P. "K istorii borby za gramotnost v Krasnoi Armii." ('politrabotnik', No.1-2, M.1923).

Teodorovich, G. "Zachem nuzny armii politicheskie otdely. (Proekt instruktsiy)." ('Voennaya Mysl', No.2, M.1919).

Tseplis, A. "Kulturno-prosvetitelnaya rabota v Krasnoi Armii." ('Grazhdanskaya voina. Populyarno-nauchniy voenniy zhurnal Revvoensoveta Zapadnogo fronta.' No.1, 1919).

Verkhovsky, A. "Neskolko mysley po povodu sovremennoi voennoi organizatsii." ('Voennaya nauka i Revoliutsiya', bk.1, M.1921).

Vasilevsky, V.N. "Buro voennykh komissarov." ('Armiya i Flot Rabochey i Krestianskoi Rossii', M. December 1917).

Yablonskaya, F. "Shkoly i kursy politicheskoi gramoty v Krasnoi Armii." ('Politrabotnik', No.2, M.1920).

Yurenev, K.K. "Blizhe k massam." ('Voennaya Mysl', No.4, M.1919).

Zbruch, B. "Pyat let v kuznitse pobedy." ('Politrabotnik', No.11, M.1922).

Zimin, Ya. "V.I.Lenin i sozdanie vysshikh organov voennogo rukovodstva sovetskogo gosudrasta (1917-1920 gg)." ('Voенно-istoricheskii zhurnal', No.6, M.1968).

_____. "V.I.Lenin i nachalo stroitelstva vysshikh voennykh organov sovetskogo gosudarstva." ('Voенно-istoricheskii zhurnal', No.11, M.1969).

NEWSPAPERS/PERIODICALS

Other than the above books and articles that have been used for the research for this disseration, the following newspapers have also been used:

"Armiya i Flot Rabochey i Krestianskoi Rossii", (Moscow 1917-1918);

"Boevaya Pravda", (7th Army, 1919)

"Izvestiya", (Moscow, 1918-1920);

"Izvestiya Narodnogo Komissariata po Voennym Delam", (Moscow, 1918-1922);

"Krasnaya Armiya", (Moscow, 1918);

"Krasnaya Armiya", (Petrograd, 1918);

"Pravda", (Moscow, 1918-1919);

"Soldatskaya Pravda", (Moscow, 1918);

"Voенное знание", (Moscow, 1920-1921);

"Voенkor", (Moscow, 1934-1936)

"Vooruzheniy Narod", (Petrograd, 1918-1919).